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The Ties That Bind: Norms, Networks, Information, and the Organization of Political Violence

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The Ties That Bind: Norms, Networks, Information, and the Organization of Political Violence

by

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To my family and friends in Cyprus for their unwavering support.

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The Ties That Bind: Norms, Networks, Information, and the Organization of Political Violence

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The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the role of social norms and social networks on the organization of political violence. Challenging traditional accounts of collective action, this dissertation presents an alternative theoretical framework of recruitment by organizations that aim to engage in political violence. The framework hypothesizes that the use of social norms and social networks can

help overcome the collective action problem for such organizations by minimizing the need for selective incentive provision.

The theoretical framework is applied to two in-depth historical case studies of the conflicts in Chechnya (1994–1996 and 1999–2009) and Sierra Leone (1991–2002). Each case study is composed of two analyses of the organization of political violence. In the case of Chechnya, the organization of Chechen resistance in the First Russo-Chechen War (1994–1996) and the organization of Chechen resistance in the Second Russo-Chechen War (1999–2009) are treated as separate units of analysis. In the case of Sierra Leone, the units of analysis are the Revolutionary United Front that initiated the Sierra Leonean Civil War in 1991, and the Civil Defense Forces that were organized in opposition to the Revolutionary United Front in the mid-1990s.

The analysis of the results from the case studies supports the hypotheses of the theoretical framework. Both case studies exhibit significant within-case variation. In both cases, it is shown that use of the norms and networks of the sociopolitical environment within which the organizations of political violence operate has a favorable effect on successful recruitment, and that non-use of these mechanisms has a detrimental effect. In addition, the results have implications for current theoretical debates in the literature on domestic conflict, as well as policy-related implications for the potential for conflict mediation.

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List of Abbreviations

AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
APC	All People's Congress
CDF	Civil Defense Forces
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EO	Executive Outcomes
FSB	Russian Federal Security Service
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NPRC	National Provisional Ruling Council
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SLA	Sierra Leonean Army

STF	Special Task Force
ULIMO	United Liberian Movement for Democracy in Liberia
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
VPO	Violent Political Organization
WSB	West Side Boys

Chapter 1

Introduction

The central question that this dissertation intends to examine is how organizations that aim to engage in organized violence as means to some political end form and manage to attract initial recruitment. In simple terms, how do such groups ever get off the ground? Past studies of these phenomena have traditionally regarded such organizations as monolithic groups with uniform preferences that effectively pursued identical interests. For example, in his seminal account *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, Donald L. Horowitz approaches the subject from a perspective that analyzes the phenomenon strictly at the group level. As a result, the motivations, processes, outcomes, and even the prescriptions for effective conflict management that the study provides are also at the group level of analysis. Horowitz (1985, 28) states that "relations between ethnic superiors and subordinates usually embody at least some elements of social cohesion and shared expectations." He concludes that this leads to

adaptive behavior by the subordinate group to hierarchical requirements, and "a substantial measure of predictability in relationships." This type of top-down formulation, which concentrates decision-making at the elite level, essentially sidesteps the issue of recruitment, since all potential participants are regarded as active in some general and unspecified sense. All individuals who fall under the categorization of any particular conflict could actively participate at any given point in time and there are no clear criteria for differentiating between those who do participate and those who do not.

1.1 Scope of the Study

This dissertation accomplishes three major tasks: it is *literature-assessing*, it is *theory-proposing*, and it is *theory-testing*[1]. It surveys and evaluates the existing literature on intrastate conflict processes to illustrate the lacuna that exists with respect to the study of recruitment processes. A major motivation for this dissertation is that the literature has not provided satisfactory answers to the questions that this dissertations addresses.

The dissertation presents a theoretical framework in order to investigate the role of social norms and social networks on the organization of political violence. The framework represents a challenge to traditional accounts of collective action, where the prescribed solution is the provision of selective incentives in order to overcome the free-rider

[1]The terminology is from Van Evera's (1997, 89-95) discussion of dissertation types.

problem of collective action. The framework hypothesizes that the use of social norms and social networks can serve as a complementary mechanism that minimizes the need for selective incentive provision.

In order to build the theoretical framework, I synthesize elements from different bodies of literature that speak to the issue of political violence. Elements from the literatures on social movements, networks, and norms are integrated with concepts from the economic literature on asymmetric information, in order to present the theoretical argument of the framework. As a result, the dissertation advances a new understanding of the recruitment processes of violent political organizations through the formulation of a deductive argument and testable hypotheses derived from that new theoretical framework.

The theoretical framework is applied to two in-depth historical case studies of the conflicts in Chechnya (1994–1996 and 1999–2009) and Sierra Leone (1991–2002). Each case study is composed of two analyses of the organization of political violence. In the case of Chechnya, the organization of Chechen resistance in the First Russo-Chechen War (1994–1996) and the organization of Chechen resistance in the Second Russo-Chechen War (1999–2009) are treated as separate units of analysis. In the case of Sierra Leone, the units of analysis are the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) that initiated the Sierra Leonean Civil War in 1991, and the Civil Defense Forces (CDF) that were organized in opposition to the Revolutionary United Front in the mid-1990s.

1.2 Need for the study

The systematic study of conflict has mostly focused on war at the international level between nation-states. One of the defining characteristics of statehood is the monopolization over the legitimate use of force within its prescribed territory, an attribute that Max Weber famously characterized as the defining attribute of sovereignty. However, in most forms of violent conflict, that aspect of sovereignty is precisely what the actors who engage in such actions lack; in fact, in most of these situations actors are fighting on the opposite side of those institutions that enjoy the advantage of sovereignty.

Another way to state this fundamental difference between state and non-state actors is that the former invariably hold the advantage of maintaining professional standing armies while the latter do not. A fundamental consequence of this distinction is that recruitment for state and non-state actors are two markedly different processes. For many states throughout history, recruitment was a non-issue since military service was mandatory; in fact, that remains the case for the majority of nation-states. On the other hand, the trend towards the professionalization of military service has led to careerism, which effectively transforms recruitment into self-selection. However, for non-state actors the problem of how to attract membership remains.

Since the advent of professional armed forces, recruitment tactics by states have included a combination of methods that can be classified

as coercion such as mandatory service, conscription/drafting of reserves in times of increased demand, and incentive-based approaches mainly in the form of career opportunities in the armed services, as well as social and monetary benefits. Similarly, non-state actors that aim to recruit combatants must also do so by a combination of coercion and provision of incentives (both pecuniary and otherwise). By contrast, non-state actors lack both the institutionalization of a professional army within the apparatus of the nation-state and the corresponding legitimacy. At the same time though, it is also true that insurgents tend to follow the organizational structure of a professional army and usually include elements that have received specialized training either directly from a professional army or a similarly organized insurgent group.

Another crucial difference - one that is obfuscated by the transposition of the unitary actor assumption to non-state actors - is that while a professional army essentially monopolizes the legitimate use of force as an instrument that projects the power of a nation-state, non-state actors generally do not. Therefore, when researchers discuss conflicts between specific groups (ethnic or otherwise, but this practice is much more pronounced in studies of ethnic wars), they typically assume a monopolization of the use of force that may or may not exist. Moreover, this assumption presupposes that to the extent that any sub-divisions within the group exist, they all act in concert against a common enemy. However, it may be the case that within-group competition is concurrent

with between-group competition. For example, sub-groups may have a long-term incentive to fight amongst themselves for the ability to set the agenda for the entire group, even if that entails short-term losses for both the sub-group and the group as a whole.

A common way to explain the conceptual puzzle of participation in organized political violence is to characterize it as a collective action problem where potential contributors have a personal incentive to free-ride on the contributions of others. Jessica Stern (2003, 3) illustrates the concept with the following example: "When Jewish extremists attempt to lay a cornerstone for the Third Temple they hope to build, all like-minded messianic Jews (and messianic Christians) benefit. Only the participants pay: When they ascend the Temple Mount, they incur risks to their person, their livelihood, freedom, and families. Given this, the extremist should be asking himself: Why bother participating? Why not let others do the work and take the risks?" It is hard to argue with such eloquent logic; yet, as I explain later on, there are many related issues that remain unexplained. If all Jews, both extremists and moderates alike, recognize the logic (a debatable point in itself), then why does *anyone* bear the risk? Or, if at some point no one was willing to do so, who were those first risk-takers, how were they able to attract more like-minded individuals to their cause, and why did they not fail at the outset, presumably when at their most vulnerable? Most fundamentally, is it the case that *all* forms of political violence can be explained by this

theoretical device? In other words, is there no variation in the severity of collective action problems that may arise in the attempts of non-state actors to organize political violence?

Another conceptual problem that generally goes unnoticed in this transposition of the logic of collective action to the organization of political violence is that the nature of the collective benefit is never defined in exact terms. Collective action theories were initially formulated to highlight problems in the provision of public goods and to find solutions to those problems. And, by and large, overcoming collective action problems results in successful provision of those public goods, because the inducement of contribution is a sufficient determinant of successful provision. Yet consider the above example by Stern; what exactly is the public good that is being provided? It is assumed to be a collective benefit to Messianic Jews and Christians. But the outcome that would bring about the collective benefit (in this case, the construction of a Third Temple on Temple Mount) cannot possibly be the result of successful collective action. Rather, it is the outcome of a conflict process that is not captured by the dynamic presented in the example; surely the actions of Muslims are likely to have something to do with such an outcome coming about. That strategic aspect of conflict processes is completely ignored by this formulation.

But if such a framework cannot provide an explanation for conflict outcomes, then which aspect of conflict processes can it capture? The

answer is that the collective benefit that ought to be studied is the provision of *violence*. In other words, the crucial stage is the ability of political organizations to reach the conditions sufficient for the provision of violence. Thus, what is necessary is a framework that explains recruitment for the provision of political violence.

The traditional response to such questions has been that collective action problems are alleviated by the provision of personal selective incentives to individual participants in addition to the collective incentive, which by itself is insufficient to encourage participation. As I illustrate in the theoretical analysis in the next chapter, there are theoretical problems with this approach. The provision of any type of targeted selective incentives at the nascent stage of organization logically presupposes the existence of prior organizational capacity. In other words, if resources are being distributed, then the mechanisms for their distribution and the decision-making processes that resulted in them have already taken place. This necessitates the existence of the very organization structure whose formation we aim to explain. If this structure is assumed, then the theoretical puzzle is transformed from group formation to recruitment by an organization at its nascent stages. But such an organization can be expected to be relatively vulnerable at this stage of its development. For example, there could be other organizations competing for control of the same resources and aiming to attract the same participation. Even in the absence of such competition, a comparison can be made between the

organization at its nascent and its ideal form in terms of size and resource accumulation: in both cases, it could be reasonably assumed that the ideal form would be larger and control more resources than the nascent form. Therefore, this should be the stage where such organizations would want to distribute as few resources as possible in order to facilitate recruitment.

The study of recruitment is a necessary component of understanding the processes that shape the organization of political violence, as well as its conduct. No matter what the preferences of organizations that engage in political violence are, they need to achieve a sufficient membership base that would give them the capacity to attempt to reach their objectives. It is a necessary precondition for action and its accomplishment cannot simply continue to be assumed, as it has been by much of the literature. In the next section, I review the debates in the current literature in order to illustrate that the question of recruitment is not adequately addressed by the existing state of the art in the field.

Moreover, the study of recruitment has serious policy implications. Understanding how organizations of political violence get to reach 'critical mass' has serious implications for the possibility of external intervention and mediation in conflicts as well as peacemaking/peacekeeping attempts. The prospects for successful mediation are all the more relevant in cases of potential genocide or general gross violations of human rights during conflict. External actors can anticipate recruitment by understanding and examining the social factors that facilitate

recruitment. One of the criticisms leveled at approaches that tend to group conflicts in dichotomous typologies - such as those discussed in the next section - is that they provide simplistic policy recommendations that may not necessarily work in every scenario[2]. Drawing attention to the role that social components play in these processes can steer influence in the other direction, where policymakers see the utility of taking the sociopolitical context into account for each individual case, rather than make wholesale policy recommendations.

1.3 Review of the literature

In this section, I present a survey of recent trends in the literature on intrastate conflict. I give an overview of existing theoretical models that deal with the same questions that I address, and highlight the gaps that this dissertation fills in the existing literature. These models aim to explain the incidence of domestic conflict and represent the state of the art in this research area; yet they largely neglect to address the question of recruitment. I also present a review of recent literature that departs from macro-level conceptualizations of conflict processes and shifts attention to micro-level interactions. It is in this new research area that I place this dissertation.

[2]For example, see Berdal (2005) for a discussion of the effect that the 'greed and grievance' debate had on United Nations' missions in Africa.

1.3.1 Recent debates in the literature on civil wars

1.3.1.1 Ethnic and non-ethnic wars

The study of conflict at the domestic level has traditionally been the purview of the research area of comparative politics. Even then, the scope of inquiry had been restricted to the study of civil war, with the two major subdivisions of causation being ethnonationalist and ideological. In recent years, a trend has developed of increasing convergence between the study of conflict at the domestic and international level, with scholarship from comparative politics and international relations[3]. The earliest developments of this trend were guided by the transposition of key concepts such as anarchy and the security dilemma from the international to the domestic level.

The concepts of anarchy and the corresponding pursuit of power are cornerstones of international relations' theory. One can trace their usage back to the Athenian proclamation during the Melian Dialogue in Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian War that "while the strong do what they can, the weak suffer what they must" (Stassler 1996, 352). The same logic pervades Hobbes' *Leviathan* and his conception of the human condition in the state of nature as war of all against all. The logic was appropriated by the theoretical school of classical realism in international relations (Morgenthau 1948), which posited that the innate human propensity to seek power is afforded free reign in the international

[3]For a survey of this development see Lake (2003).

system due to anarchy. Subsequent offshoots of the classical realist tradition, most notably defensive realism (Waltz 1959; 1979) reevaluated the consequences of anarchy as a need for security in an environment where the threat of violence against any state was constant. The associated inference, known as the security dilemma, is that attempts by one state to improve its own security makes all other states worse off leading to a spiral of insecurity when they in turn attempt to improve their own security as a result of the actions of the first (Jervis 1978). The logic was transposed from the international level to the domestic level by Posen (1993), who argued that the breakdown of state authority leads to a condition of anarchy at the domestic level and a corresponding security dilemma among ethnic groups. Fearon (1998) extended the logic by claiming that this phenomenon should in turn lead to conflict among ethnic groups due to a contractual inability to make credible commitments[4].

The problem with the application of this logic to cases of civil war is that it assumes that groups are unitary, well-defined, and purposely single-minded. It assumes that the master cleavage of the conflict adequately captures both the causes of the conflict as well as the motivations of individuals at both the political and the private

[4]Interestingly, the origins of Fearon's conceptual framework can be traced back to the usage of the concepts of contractual incompleteness and unenforceability in the theory of the firm. For example, see Hart (1995) for the original formulation and Bowles (2004) for a reinterpretation. In recent years, the research area of contractual incompleteness has become increasingly important in the field of economics, as well as political science. Most recently, Lake (2009) has used the same theoretical foundations to explain the role of hierarchy in political organization.

level (Kalyvas 2008). However, there is nothing that necessitates the involvement of a group in conflict as a monolith. The unitary actor assumption is easier to justify in theories of international relations where the unit of analysis has traditionally (and almost exclusively) been the sovereign nation-state in the post-Westphalian international system. However, this assumption is much more tenuous in the case of non-state actors, especially in the area of combatant recruitment.

During the Cold War, the phenomenon of domestic conflict was mainly characterized as a byproduct of superpower competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. Correspondingly, the causes of domestic conflict fell on either side of a dichotomy between ideologically driven competition for the control of the state and ethnonationalist tendencies in plural and/or post-colonial states. The end of the Cold War brought about a remarkable, and rather unanticipated, increase in the incidence of domestic conflict. Interstate conflict was largely supplanted by conflict at the domestic level. Thus, the end of history (Fukuyama 1992) and obsolescence of war (Mueller 1989) forecast by many, as the defining ideological struggle of the century between democracy and communism ended, did not materialize; rather, interstate conflict was largely supplanted by conflict at the domestic level. The main consequence of this shift in the nature of conflict has been the disproportionate participation and targeting of civilians. Taking into account differences in coding casualties of civil wars, such conflicts

resulted in a total of 15-20 million deaths and approximately 67 million displaced persons between 1945 and 1999. By comparison, interstate wars resulted in 3.3 million deaths over the same time-period. In addition to considerably more fatalities, civil wars have caused more internal and external displacement of civilians, and disruption of economic and sociocultural activities than interstate wars (Sambanis 2004).

Since the end of the Cold War, a large portion of the literature on domestic conflict has focused on the causes and implications of ethnic civil war. Lake and Rothchild (1996) applied the framework of the ethnic security dilemma discussed above to the wave of ethnic conflict that came about at the end of the Cold War. Yet while the general consensus at the time was that the end of the Cold War contributed directly to the sudden increase in ethnic conflict incidence, more recent accounts in the literature present a different argument. Fearon and Laitin (2003) argue that while the end of the Cold War fomented an environment that facilitated these conflicts, it did not cause them. Rather, the current prevalence of internal war is characterized as the result of a steady accumulation of protracted conflicts.

Scholarship on the effect of ethnicity on conflict generally finds a positive correlation. Sambanis (2001, 280) finds that "ethnic heterogeneity is significantly and positively correlated with the onset of ethnic war."[5] Reynal-Querol (2002) finds that different components of ethnic identity

[5]It should be noted that this finding is antithetical to the literature on the economic causes on civil war outlined further below.

may have different effects on the likelihood of conflict; namely, she finds that religion is a more significant social cleavage than language in the development of civil war. The exact causal mechanisms in this research area remain under-specified. For example, whereas Cederman and Girardin (2007) find that ethnic minority dominance is a major risk factor, Fearon, Kasara and Laitin (2007) find that the association is weak and that the relationship is a partial correlation rather than a causal factor.

1.3.1.2 "New" and "old" wars

A branch in the literature that emerged in the post-Cold War era made a sharp distinction at that momentous point in time. The main argument was that from that point on wars would be distinctly different in nature from past conflicts. The original statement of this thesis was made in journalistic accounts that surveyed the landscape of war in the 1990s and saw unprecedented phenomena in the conduct of political violence. Michael Ignatieff (1993; 1997) saw nationalism as the definitive cause of conflict in the new paradigm. Kaplan's (1993; 1994) travels through the Balkans and West Africa resulted in prognostications that so-called "ethnic hatreds" - kept in check by the order imposed by the Cold War - would come to the fore, and that an increasingly anarchic international system would suffer the erosion of sovereignty over time amidst a host of problems[6].

[6]Kaplan is discussed further in the case study of Sierra Leone, since it represents one of Kaplan's examples for this emerging trend.

In addition to that trend - which was very successful in affecting popular conceptions of future at the time - there are scholarly accounts of a similar vein. Holsti (1996), building on Van Creveld's (1991) ideas on the transformation of war, presents an image of war that borders on the chaotic. Holsti claims that in new wars there are no strategies, no tactics, and no military organization of which to speak. More significantly for the author, there is no distinction between the state, the military, and the population. The ultimate difference is that old wars had political goals: either to protect an existing political community or to create a new one. But "in these wars, ordinary cost-benefit analyses that underlie wars as a "continuation of politics by other means" no longer apply" (Holsti 1996, 38)[7].

Kaldor (1999) argues that new wars differ from earlier wars in three fundamental ways: goals, methods, and financing. According to Kaldor, new wars are fought over identities, whereas old wars were fought over ideology. Whereas old wars were fought with conventional means, strategies, and tactics in an attempt to control territory and state power, new wars are fought as guerrilla insurgencies in an attempt to control populations and resources. The final difference - one that highlights the main theme of the book, which is that globalizing tendencies are inextricably linked with the transformation of war - is the contrast in the two types of war economies. The political economies of old wars were

[7]It is unclear if by this Holsti means that there are absolutely no political goals in new wars.

"centralized, totalizing, and autarchic" (Kaldor 1999, 9). The new war economies are characterized either by external support through channels such as diasporas or transnational networks, or self-financing that results from exploitation of domestic resources.

Kalyvas (2001) derives three major dimensions of differentiation between new and old civil wars from this literature. He distills the literature to the following points: old wars were caused by grievances, broadly supported by the population, and rebel behavior was generally restrained in the use of violence; conversely, new wars are characterized by insurgent behavior that is criminal, unpopular and wantonly violent. Kalyvas finds that this dichotomization of civil war types is overstated, and possibly the result of overlooking historical research on past conflicts. In addition, he cautions against paying disproportionate attention to highly visible events (such as atrocities that dominate media attention) that may be potentially misleading by drawing attention from the broader patterns of warfare and violence in a particular conflict.

1.3.1.3 'Greed and grievance'

Perhaps the most important development in the newly emergent literature on civil wars has been the replacement of the ethnonationalist-ideological dichotomy with that of 'greed and grievance' (Berdal and Malone 2000; Collier and Hoeffler 2000). According to this new approach, new civil wars arise from either political grievances - resembling in that sense

more traditional accounts of rebellion such as Gurr (1970) - or narrowly motivated greed, in cases where groups that engage in violence do so for the purpose of resource extraction.

The most prominent scholarship in this research area has been conducted by Collier and Hoeffler. Building on the foundations of earlier economic theorists of rebellion such as Grossman (1990), they find that natural resource endowments are positively correlated with the risk of civil war, whereas ethno-linguistic fractionalization is negatively correlated (Collier and Hoeffler 1998). Therefore, greed as the motivation for rebel organizations to try to capture state power is more significant than identity-based group grievance.

In later refinements of their model, Collier and Hoeffler (2004) define grievance as high inequality, lack of political rights, and ethnic/religious diversity. Moreover, they shift the conceptual focus away from purely economic considerations by equating greed with political opportunity for mobilization, which they refer to as "viability of rebellion" (Collier and Hoeffler 2004, 563). Correspondingly, their placement of cases on the 'greed-grievance' scale effectively becomes one of political motivation versus political opportunity. They conclude that opportunity is more significant than motivation as a determinant of civil war onset.

An implicit assertion in this framework (one that justifies the conceptual shift from greed to opportunity) is that greed is a constant while opportunity is variable. In this respect, the authors are making

assertions about human nature; namely, that greed is a characteristic innate to sociopolitical organization and, by extension, to sociopolitical competition over the allocation of limited resources. The theoretical framework adopts the Hobbesian premise of the constancy of greed from Hirshleifer's postulation of the 'Machiavellian Theorem' which states that "no-one will ever pass up an opportunity to gain a one-sided advantage by exploiting another party" (Hirshleifer 2001, 10). Effectively, this statement is logically equivalent to one that claims that human nature is inherently profit-seeking, even if the use of force is necessary to attain that profit.

Similar to the Collier and Hoeffler model, Fearon and Laitin (2003) find that greed is a better predictor of the onset of civil war than grievance, and that greed is much better defined as political opportunity rather than economic motivation. They define political opportunity as the existence of conditions that favor insurgency, which involves specific technologies of military conflict (small, lightly armed bands practicing guerrilla warfare from rural base areas) and the existence of a relatively weak state. These factors are similar to the Collier Hoeffler model that identifies reliance on primary commodity exports, an abundance of young males, and recent periods of rapid economic decline as the primary attributes of political opportunity.

Sambanis (2004, 260), in evaluating both the Collier and Hoeffler and Fearon and Laitin models finds that they are both "often right for the wrong reasons yet also wrong for the wrong reasons" by

finding disagreement between the mechanisms underlying the processes discussed in the statistical models and case studies of the two theoretical frameworks. Despite this critique, Sambanis agrees that more research should be conducted in this area by using the methodology employed by the two models, which is a combination of statistical modeling and in-depth case studies by area/country experts. Unlike both Collier and Hoeffler and Fearon and Laitin, Sambanis is not too quick to dismiss the importance of ethnicity. In discussing the difficulty of defining ethnic war, he asserts that ethnic mobilization is significant in itself even if it is not a determinant of war onset per se. According to this logic, ethnicity can serve to overcome collective action problems for the groups that are doing the fighting.

In recent years, the conceptual distinction between greed and grievance has come under fire. Mats Berdal (2005), one of the two co-editors of the book (Berdal and Malone 2000) that popularized the Collier and Hoeffler model, argues that the distinction is not as useful as initially thought. New research shows that the case has been overstated in relation to other political, cultural, and strategic factors (Ballentine and Sherman 2003). The authors themselves have recently amended their original framework in order to take into account valid criticisms of the paradigm by shifting focus completely to the factors that shape political opportunity (Collier, Hoeffler and Rohner 2008). In this iteration of the framework, they group 'greed and grievance' under the label

of motivation, and find them both lacking in explanatory power in comparison to feasibility.

However, the most significant drawback of the paradigm - at least for the subject of this dissertation - is that it represents yet another dichotomy that presents a static depiction of what are essentially complex, dynamic, and strategic conflict processes. In fact, not only is the conflict process dynamic, it may actually change the preferences and objectives of participants as it develops (Kalyvas 2008). As a result, the process of assigning a typology that describes the conflict at its outset, or ex post facto labeling of a conflict without consideration of the strategic interplay of actors that caused its trajectory, is very problematic.

1.3.1.4 Micro-level approaches[8]

The approaches presented above mostly focus their attention at the macro-level of conflict causation. Another recent development, however, has been the shift to micro-level mechanisms by shifting attention to the motivations of individuals participating in organized political violence.

Gates (2002) uses principal-agent modelling analysis to examine the organizational structure of rebel groups. He finds that geography, ethnicity, and ideology are the three main determinants of military success, defection deterrence, and recruitment strategy. The author's

[8]The work of Jeremy Weinstein (2005;2007) independently, as well as with Macartan Humphreys (2004; 2006; 2008) is relevant to this discussion. However, since it is of direct significance to my theoretical framework and the case study of Sierra Leone, it is presented in detail in the respective chapters.

objective is to address the criticisms of the models presented above by introducing a dynamic element to the modeling process. Gates' model is definitely a step in the right direction in the literature. It combines micro-level and macro-level consideration and, as a result, provides a much more comprehensive conceptualization of the processes that shape recruitment in organizations of political violence. One drawback, however, is that Gates "presume[s] that many collective action problems associated with rebellion are overcome" (Gates 2002, 11). But, as the theoretical framework that I present argues, the manner in which an organization of political violence manages to overcome the collective action problem has significant consequences on its ability to recruit both at the initial stage, and throughout the duration of a conflict.

Kalyvas (2003) distances himself from the 'greed and grievance' dichotomy by focusing on the individual level even further. His main argument is that political violence cannot be adequately understood through the usage of monolithic conceptions of group identity that fail to differentiate among the potentially divergent motivations of actors at various levels. Instead, he proposes that we should focus our attention at the interplay between political and private identities and actions. This approach allows theorists to disaggregate the macro-level phenomenon of civil war into its constituent parts, the many individual acts of violence that provide coherence to the master cleavage of the conflict.

Kalyvas also adapts the distinction between 'greed and grievance' to his own terms. He analyzes the philosophical foundations of the two categories as derived, respectively, from Hobbes and Schmitt. In his framework, the juxtaposition is not between economic vs. political gain, or the pursuit of opportunistic profiteering vs. the expression of collective grievance. Rather, it is one of anomy and anarchy brought about by the breakdown of state authority vs. the very essence of groupness that defines the master cleavage of wars. In other words, it is the consideration and juxtaposition of private motivations and group loyalty. Ultimately, he concludes, only through the consideration of both factors can we understand the relationship between what motivates individuals to act in a self-regarding manner and what motivates them to act in a group-regarding manner, as well as the fact that the two types of behavior are actually compatible.

Other accounts focus on specific phenomena during conflict - such as the level of violence - that are not captured by the static dichotomies of the models presented above. For example, Valentino, Huth and Balch-Lindsay (2004) examine the incidence of mass killing, and find that atrocities are often the result of calculated military strategy. They find that, more often (and contrary to mass media portrayal of civil wars), it is the government that resorts to mass killing rather the rebels, since the relationship between guerrilla armies and the local population makes them difficult to distinguish, and as a result more prone to be the victims.

Kalyvas (2004) finds that indiscriminate violence (the element usually termed "irrational" by more casual commentators of civil wars) is an element of strategic utility when its cost is exceeded by the cost of selective violence to the extent that it is unfeasible for organizations of political violence.

This dissertation follows the philosophical principles of the works described in this section. In order to further our understanding of conflict processes at the domestic level, research in this area must necessarily account for the dynamic and strategic aspects of interaction. A study of recruitment is but one of the possible ways in which to contribute to the literature. It is, however, a very important component that requires immediate attention.

1.4 Methodology

This dissertation presents a theoretical framework of recruitment by organizations of political violence. The framework is built through a deductive process of analyzing the argument in the theory of collective action (Olson 1965), identifying problems with that theory, and then amending the theory in ways that address those problems.

The theoretical framework is then tested through two in-depth case studies of conflicts. Neither case study was used at the theory building stage; in fact, there were no theory-building case studies as the framework

is constructed from first premises. Both case studies are based on review of the secondary literature. The analysis of the two cases is not presented as one cross-case comparative study, but as two within-case process tracing studies of the organizations that were active in each case. Therefore, while the case studies follow the convention within the literature of 'countries as case studies', that is not the unit of analysis. Instead, the unit of analysis is the organization of political violence. This allows the project to take into consideration the macro-level (the conflict as a whole), the meso-level (the primary unit of analysis) and the micro-level (individual participants)[9].

The cases were selected based on multiple criteria. Both cases exhibit significant data richness. Since the case studies are based on secondary literature, the cases need to have been studied sufficiently and in ways that allow access to the voices of participants rather than the interpretations of the authors alone[10]. In both cases, there is considerable within-case variation on many different levels: there are multiple organizations, evolving criteria of membership and recruitment, and shifting patterns of operation and objectives. This allows the characterization of the cases to move beyond static typologies that focus on single-variable determinants (namely, Chechnya as a case of ethnic/religious conflict, and Sierra Leone as a case of resource predation)

[9]See Sambanis (2004) for a discussion on the use of case studies to address multiple levels of analysis.

[10]There are various issues associated with this approach discussed in the 'Limitations' section in Chapter Five.

in order to capture the complexity and dynamism of the organizational processes that lead to political violence. Moreover, insofar as these cases do exhibit prototypical typological characteristics, testing them allows for future cross-case comparisons.

Another important consideration is that cases are drawn from opposite sides of the debates that are presented above in the literature review. Sierra Leone can be characterized as an instance of greed, as a non-ethnic conflict, and as a "new" war. Conversely, Chechnya can be considered as a case of grievance, as an ethnic war, and as a conflict that exhibits the characteristics of "old" wars. Thus, an analysis of these cases not only tests the theoretical framework that is presented, but also provides insight into the utility of these scholarly debates with respect to recruitment and the organization of political violence. Ideally the framework can be applied to cases that may lie at either side of these typological dichotomies, thereby rendering the theory universally applicable. Therefore, testing the framework with what may be considered as ideal type cases to these debates, such as Chechnya and Sierra Leone, serves as a legitimate means to assess the framework's scope of applicability.

Theoretical implications that result from the application of the framework to the case studies, limitations of the project, and suggestions for further research are discussed in detail in Chapter Five.

1.5 Discussion of the results[11]

This section discusses briefly the results of the dissertation. The dissertation reaches significant results in two different ways: one, by the fact that the case study analyses support the hypotheses generated by the theoretical framework, and two, by making contributions to the understanding of both case studies that it examines, Chechnya and Sierra Leone.

Both case studies exhibit significant within-case variation. In each case, one of the two organizations of political violence under examination positively supports the hypotheses of the framework, since it exhibits both the antecedent and consequent conditions of the hypotheses. Moreover, in each case, the other of the two organizations indirectly supports the hypotheses, since it exhibits neither the antecedent nor the consequent conditions of the hypotheses[12].

The case study of Chechnya challenges the commonly-made distinction between the two Wars that characterizes the First one as an ethnonationalist war of independence and the Second one as an Islamic "Holy War" that is part of a global *jihad*. Instead, the case study presents the argument of an evolutionary conflict process. The changes

[11] This is a brief presentation of the results. There is a more extended discussion in Chapter Five.

[12] The support is indirect since it is possible but cannot be confirmed. The lack of both antecedent and consequent conditions may indicate support for an argument of the co-existence of the antecedent and the consequent, but it also may be caused by other factors unspecified in the statement of the argument. This issue is discussed in more detail in the section on 'Theoretical Implications' in Chapter Five.

that defined the conflict also altered the processes of the organization of political violence and the recruitment strategies of the Chechen resistance. Furthermore, the same transformation was evident in the conduct of political violence as the conflict evolved.

The case study of Sierra Leone challenges the notion that the Sierra Leonean civil war was simply a struggle over resource predation due to the presence of lootable goods, namely alluvial diamonds. The case study illustrates that the sociopolitical processes that led to the formation of the Revolutionary United Front were complex and unrelated to resource predation, at least at the nascent stage of organization. Moreover, the formation of the Civil Defense Forces was a process completely divorced from the purported causes of the conflict.

These results have implications, not only by testing the theoretical framework proposed in this dissertation,but also by responding to shortcomings that I identify in the literature. Future refinements and applications of the framework can further illustrate the critical importance of recruitment to our understanding of conflict processes and the organization of political violence.

1.6 Outline of the dissertation

Chapter Two begins with an introduction of the concept of a Violent Political Organization and its usage as the unit of analysis. The general

statement of the collective action problem is presented, and then reformulated to focus on the framework of interaction that characterizes the collective action of organized political violence. This reformulation illustrates the problems of the traditional solution to collective action problems which is the provision of selective incentives to individual participants. Elements from other literatures - the economic literature on asymmetric information, the sociological literature on collective action, and the emerging literature on social norms - are synthesized into an alternative theoretical framework. The objective of the framework is to explain the role of those elements in the collective action of organized political violence. Finally, the chapter presents some observable parameters and hypotheses that are used in evaluating the explanatory power of the framework. That evaluation is in the form of the study of two different cases in the chapters that follow.

Chapters Three and Four respectively present the case studies of the project: the Russo-Chechen conflict and the Sierra Leonean civil war. In each chapter, after a historical overview of the conflict, I present the conditions in the sociopolitical environment of each case study that reflect the parameters of the theoretical framework and the ways in which they operate in that environment. Then, each chapter presents the analysis of the organization of political violence and recruitment over the course of the conflict. There are two units of analysis in each chapter: the

organization of Chechen resistance in the First and Second Wars, and the Revolutionary United Front and Civil Defense Forces in Sierra Leone.

Chapter Five concludes this dissertation with a summary discussion of the results, some theoretical implications that are revealed through the case study analyses, limitations of the study, and suggestions for further research.

Chapter 2

Theory

2.1 Chapter overview

This chapter presents the general statement of the collective action problem, applies that general framework to the organization of political violence, surveys literatures of conceptual relevance, and presents an alternative framework that brings these elements together by integrating features from those literatures into the framework of collective action.

More specifically, in this chapter I build a logical progression starting from the general account of collective action that identifies some analytical puzzles which become more problematic once applied to the specific framework for the organization of political violence. I then illustrate the potential of information to obviate, or at least, supplement the provision of selective incentives as a solution to the free-riding problem of collective action. I present solutions suggested by economic

models of asymmetric information, sociological models of the study of social movements and organizations, and theoretical models of social norm transmission. Finally, I synthesize elements from each of these and present some observable hypotheses that will be tested through application to case studies in subsequent chapters.

2.2 Introduction to Violent Political Organizations

Violent Political Organizations (hereafter VPOs) are groups of individuals that possess the ability to coordinate action within their operational framework. They exhibit formal organizational power structure with variability in the degree of centralization of power. They have collectively formulated preferences and stated objectives but there can be considerable incongruence between the two; in other words, their preferences may extend beyond their stated objectives.

It should be noted that the specific outcome and collective good that promotes free-riding within the operational framework on the part of individuals is not by default the stated objective of a VPO. That outcome is defined (and rendered a collective good) by the nature of strategic interaction among the relevant actors within the framework, whereas the stated objectives of the organization are declared by its core leadership.

The composition of a VPO can be divided into three major subgroups: the core leadership, active participants, and a support network. Individually and collective, these are subgroups of the potential pool of participants which in itself is a subgroup of the polity. The core leadership represents the size of a VPO at its nascent stage; it consists of those that frame its ideology and preferences, which they communicate to potential participants. They define the behavior of the organization and dictate the recruitment strategy that the organization will employ. The subgroup of active participants includes all individuals who join the organization and undertake violent action on its behalf. In hierarchical terms, they stand below the core. Most significantly, this subgroup includes those who specialize in the production of violence. Insofar as the hierarchical structure of the VPO resembles that of an institutionalized nation-state army[1], the core may also - and frequently does - include violence specialists. The Support Network may participate in a variety of ways that may or may not involve physical interaction with the rest of the VPO; for example, participation may involve logistical support, funding of operations, or the dissemination of information.

[1]There are some benefits but also some disadvantages of such a structure; a strict hierarchy facilitates organization, but the field strategy and tactics that the VPO employs may benefit from a more diffuse decision-making power structure.

2.3 A general statement of the collective action problem

The canonical formulation of the collective action problem (Olson 1965) holds that groups that aim to provide public goods, which are both non-excludable and jointly supplied, should be unlikely to form solely on the basis of providing the good. *Infeasibility of exclusion* means that under normal circumstances no member of the group can be prevented from enjoying the good once it is provided. *Jointness of supply* means that the contribution of each individual member is of such small proportion to the capacity of the entire group that no member can unilaterally provide the good, thus necessitating the participation of the majority of possible contributors.

As Olson (1965, 2) famously states: "[U]nless the number of individuals in a group is quite small, or unless there is coercion or some other special device to make individuals act in their common interest, *rational, self-interested individuals will not act to achieve their common or group interests*." Thus, if the probability of successful provision is low then individuals are better off not contributing at all since their contribution is unlikely to sufficiently affect the likelihood of successful provision. Therefore, a decision by an individual to contribute would be individually irrational since he would incur some cost for no benefit. On the other hand, if the probability of successful provision is high as a result of high

participation, then an individual is better off free-riding and receiving the collective benefit while others bear the cost of contribution. In this case, any individual's decision to participate would be individually irrational since it would entail a higher cost for no additional gain.

The dominant strategy of this strategic interaction, which Ostrom (2000, 137) refers to as "the zero-contribution thesis" is equivalent to the mutual defection equilibrium of the famous matrix-form game of Prisoner's Dilemma, where rational, self-interested individuals forsake the potential mutual gains from cooperation due to the strategic structure of their interaction, which always makes it better for both to defect. Hardin's (1971) initial work on the collective action problem transformed the 2-player matrix form version of the Prisoner's Dilemma game into the interaction among all potential members of the group. Each individual member-candidate was modeled as one player while the other represented the rest of the group; each player - as per the standard form of Prisoner's Dilemma - had a binary choice set to either cooperate or defect. Hardin's (1982) later volume advanced the field by presenting a more precise, n-player generalization of the game that more accurately resembled the interaction among a large number of rational, self-interested individuals. While the complexity of the explanation progressed, the fundamental principles regarding the nature of the players, the incentives provided to them as well as the strategic impediments to cooperation remained constant. Ultimately, the logical

conclusion of mutual (or, in this case, collective) defection persisted.[2] However, as Ostrom (2000, 138) points out, the zero contribution thesis contradicts everyday life. Thus, a satisfactory theory of collective action needs to account for both group formation and recruitment of additional members.

The solution that is implied in the above quote from Olson (either coercion, in which case membership is involuntary, or some other special device) has also persisted. Olson (1965, 51) states that in the absence of coercion, only a separate and selective incentive will stimulate a rational individual in a latent group to act in a group-oriented way as a way to separate those who contribute from those who do not. Moreover, Olson specifies that these incentives could be either positive or negative for the targeted members, inducing contribution either by making it more beneficial or by making abstention more costly. Much of the work that has followed Olson's paradigm, especially in political science, has focused on the analysis of the forms that these selective incentives can take.[3]

I identify two fundamental problems with this approach. The first is that the probability of successful group formation is not treated as a continuum; rather, all analytical emphasis is placed at the extremes where non-participation is certain. This suggests that the propensity of each

[2]The work of Robert Axelrod (see, among others, the following pioneering works: 1980, 1981, with William Hamilton 1981, 1984) has spawned a voluminous body of work aimed at providing an answer to the question of which cooperative strategies can overcome the problem of mutual defection.

[3]For example, Lichbach's (1995) seminal account can be characterized as an exhaustive categorization of selective incentives of collective dissent.

potential member to participate is placed at neither probability extreme but somewhere in between. In fact, the very possibility of selective incentive provision necessitates a non-zero probability of success; if not, then who is providing the incentives given that everyone is defecting? Conversely, that probability cannot be equal to one since the group should not be willing to expend resources on selective incentives that would not yield a higher probability of successful provision anyway. Therefore, the probability of successful provision must necessarily lie between the two extremes.

The second - and much more significant in practical terms - problem is that the provision of selective incentives necessitates some pre-existing level of group cohesion. In this respect, it is somewhat peculiar that the logical consequent of this framework is to argue that under no circumstances will individuals be better off participating in the absence of selective incentives. If those who provide the selective incentives to future recruits were also the recipients of selective incentives themselves, the problem is simply pushed to a higher order with the fear of leading to an infinite regress. The possibility that they were coerced begs the same question: if they were, then by whom? If they were not the recipients of either selective incentives or victims of coercion, then how did the group form to begin with? To present the problem in Olson's terms, how can it be that a latent group has the organizational capacity to induce participation in either of these two ways? Conversely, if the group

is not latent but active, then theories of collective action can only explain recruitment but not group formation.

As a logical consequent, recruitment by a small, entrepreneurial group at its nascent stage then becomes the crucial determinant of successful provision. The question remains whether targeted selective incentive provision is a sufficient condition to overcome the free-rider problem. More importantly, is it a sufficient condition in the application of this framework to phenomena of organized political violence? These questions are addressed in the following section.

2.4 The collective action problem of organized political violence

The previous section provides a general statement of the collective action problem. In this section, that framework is examined in the form of a theoretical application to the organization of political violence. The goal is to illustrate that the specific parameters of the organization of political violence differentiate the framework in some specific and systematic ways such that the aforementioned solution of the provision of selective incentives may be either insufficient or inapplicable and, therefore, needs to be revised.

In the previous section it is shown that for each individual potential participant, the decision to contribute is as follows:

Expected Utility = Collective Good + Selective Incentives - Cost

For contribution to be individually rational in situations where the conditions of infeasibility of exclusion and jointness of supply hold, the value of selective incentives needs to at least equal the cost of contribution. However, in the reformulation of the framework for cases of organized political violence, there are two separate costs of contribution for which each potential participant would need to account: the cost of entry and the potential (and highly variable) cost of participation. The first of the two is analogous to the cost as expressed in the general statement of the problem presented in the previous section. The second is not captured by that framework since the emphasis is on contribution as the determinant of successful provision.

Yet insofar as the organization of political violence may be characterized as a collective action problem, the intended outcome is not achieved merely through successful organization. Achieving the objective of politically oriented action is one possible outcome of a conflict process and it is by no means assured. While the study of that process is beyond the scope of this analysis, it is still crucial to consider the risk that accompanies participation since it ought to be part of the decision-making mechanism for each participant. Thus, I propose that the decision to contribute should be reformulated to reflect this aspect in the following way:

Expected Utility = Collective Good + Selective Incentives - (Cost + Risk)

It should be obvious that, all other things being equal, the reformulated expected total cost is higher than that in the original formulation. As in the previous case, the value of selective incentives needs to at least equal the expected total cost; therefore, it may be concluded that the value of selective incentives necessary to induce contribution will be higher in any situation where participation carries some associated risk for the individual. It follows that the higher the perception of risk, the less willing any individual will be to contribute and the higher will be the value of selective incentives that will be necessary in order to offset the difference.

The solution that is suggested by this reformulation seems fairly simple: when aspiring organizations plan to engage in behavior that is risky for their participants, they simply provide more selective incentives. I argue that this suggestion, albeit logical, is problematic for a number of reasons that are outlined below.

In the general form of the collective action problem the recruitment strategy is maximum inclusion. Olson argues that "when there is organized or coordinated effort in an inclusive group, as many as can be persuaded to help will be included in that effort" (1965, 40). This statement seems intuitively plausible, so would a VPO be expected to simply maximize recruitment? After all, group size ought to have a direct effect on the expected probability of success. I argue that the inclusion of the risk factor differentiates that strategy. At any given

point in time, an organization controls a specific amount of resources which may or may not afford the organization the capacity to reach its recruitment goals through the necessary provision of selective incentives. If its existing capacity is sufficient for its goals, then this provision may be all that is necessary. However, an organization looking to establish itself at a nascent stage can be expected to be relatively small in size and in control of relatively scarce resources. Assuming that those resources are finite in the short run, then the task with which an organization is faced can be characterized as a series of resource allocations over time. The recruitment of one additional participant requires some portion of those resources which exacerbates the resource drain imposed by elevated selective incentive requirements, making the organization less likely to satisfy its recruitment demands through the sole provision of those incentives. This in turn suggests that such an organization would be even less likely to follow a strategy of maximum inclusion. It is, therefore, possible to face the seemingly paradoxical situation where supply exceeds demand and the organization is faced with the problem of finding the right individuals to participate.

The problem can be characterized as an informational asymmetry of fitness: individuals may hold private information about their ability to participate effectively. They may misrepresent that ability or they may even have mistaken beliefs about their own fitness. This condition may lead to adverse selection for the organization whereby the lack

of credible information on the projected future performance of each participant makes bad choices just as likely to occur as good ones. Moreover, participants who engage in the provision of violence and perform poorly by being captured, wounded, or killed can have a variety of detrimental effects on the VPO: if captured they could provide confidential information to the opposition or relinquish weaponry, if wounded, they will represent an additional and unanticipated resource burden, if killed the resources expended on preparing them for battle are wasted and they will not be available for future contribution.[4]

Thus, the problems of asymmetric information and resource scarcity exhibit feedback characteristics that exacerbate the overarching problem of collective action. In light of this observation, provision of selective incentives seems like a very costly mechanism for overcoming the collective action problem. By and large, political scientists have not paid sufficient attention to the role of information in collective action frameworks. The work done by economists to provide solutions in this area is outlined in the following section.

[4]The phenomenon of suicide terrorism presents an interesting exception to this statement, since the success of such an operation largely relies on the death of a combatant.

2.5 Models of asymmetric information[5]

The modern literature on the economics of information has been largely framed by the seminal work of George A. Akerlof, Michael Spence and Joseph E. Stiglitz in the 1970s for which they were jointly awarded the Sveriges Riksbank Nobel Prize in Economics in 2001.[6] The field is rooted in the assumptions that information is intrinsically valuable as a determinant of market outcomes, and that sharing and acquiring information is inherently costly. Broadly defined, a market failure of asymmetric information is any situation where one party to a transaction holds private information that directly affects the outcome of the transaction. Depending on the nature of the information, the incentive structure for either party may be affected positively or negatively.

The work of Akerlof, Spence and Stiglitz defines the scope of problems that may result from informational asymmetries and mechanisms that can alleviate their effects. Akerlof's (1970) seminal article on the used car market defines the problem of adverse selection. In that case the asymmetry exists between the seller and the buyer of a used car with the former holding private information over whether the car in question is a "lemon" (meaning defective in some way that is not readily identifiable). The existence of both good cars and "lemons" on the market

[5] For an overview of these models and their impact on the growing field of information economics, see Stiglitz 2000.

[6] For a historical survey of the groundwork that led to the development of this research area as well as the field itself, see Stiglitz 2000.

and buyers' inability to distinguish between the two can have market-wide repercussions. If there were two separate markets for good and bad cars then two separate price points would be set with the price for good ones being obviously the higher of the two. But since there is only one market and buyers cannot be certain of the quality of any particular car then a Pareto suboptimal price will be set that tends to undervalue good cars and overvalue "lemons".

The Spence and the Rothschild-Stiglitz models provide self-selection mechanisms through which market agents can credibly reveal private information thereby alleviating the effects of adverse selection. Spence's (1973; 1974) approach relies on high quality agents differentiating themselves from low quality agents through the use of costly signaling. For the signal to be credible it must be sufficiently costly that low quality agents would be either unable or unwilling to undertake the cost. Spence uses education as the signal that potential employees send to potential employers. The Rothschild-Stiglitz (1976) model approaches the problem from the side of uninformed agents by analyzing what they can do to improve the outcome through the inducement of self-selection by the agents who hold private information. The example used is the insurance market; similarly to the uninformed buyers in Akerlof's model and the uninformed employers in Spence's model, Rothschild and Stiglitz investigate the potential for insurance

companies to differentiate between high-risk (i.e. low-quality) and low-risk (i.e. high-quality) individuals.

The problem of asymmetric information has been all but ignored by the political science literature on the organization of violence. In the only other account that provides a theoretical model as a solution to this problem, Weinstein (2005; 2007) models the process as an organizational task of hiring by characterizing combatants as "job applicants". Similarly to the Spence model, individuals undertake contractual commitment as a promise to illustrate their quality over time. High-quality individuals are more likely to make the commitment than opportunistic low-quality individuals who are bluffing since they are more likely to perform successfully. Moreover, as payoffs from participation are deferred to the future - by which time the level of quality is revealed through actual performance of combat-related tasks - the rewards of bluffing are minimized.

Weinstein's characterization of the problem is similar to the one presented here. Both highlight the significance of the informational asymmetry built into the interaction between the core leadership of a VPO and its pool of potential participants. Both approaches assign information-revealing value to community-wide institutions. Ultimately, the two approaches differ on the degree to which they prioritize this aspect of the framework. In the theoretical framework that I present, the role of social norms and social networks in providing information and

constraining the repertoire of actions available to potential participants is much more pronounced. Moreover, the Weinstein model hinges on participants' inclination towards future deference of private rewards. While that is a significant contribution in itself with testable empirical implications, it exhibits two shortcomings: 1) it keeps the analytical focus on the provision of selective incentives, and 2) it may be an unnecessary consideration for VPOs if the effect of social norms and social networks is sufficient to sustain a desirable recruitment strategy.

The Weinstein model is a valuable contribution to the literature on the organization of political violence. There is a small but growing movement in the literature towards the exploration of micro variables rather than a reliance on broad categories of causation or statistical analyses of global and long-term trends which have been the mainstays for some time. Very little of that is directly focused on analyzing the determinants and implications of recruitment. It is precisely in this area that this theoretical framework is situated.

2.6 Alternative theoretical framework

In the rest of a chapter, I present a new approach that shifts emphasis from the provision of selective incentives to the facilitating role that social

norms and social networks play in the organization of political violence, especially in terms of shaping recruitment strategies[7].

VPOs do not operate in a vacuum; they are products of the sociopolitical environment within which they operate. On the basis of this practical observation, I argue that VPOs can utilize the existing social norms and social networks of their environment in order to optimize recruitment by alleviating the inherent problems of asymmetric information. Social norms and social networks can serve as mechanisms that reveal information about individual recruits. Thus, they can help alleviate problems of asymmetric information as well as guide distributional decision-making processes. Moreover, a social network can help minimize free-riding by enforcing contribution through existing social norms.

In the sections that follow I present a review of the literatures on social networks and social norms that analyze the conceptual foundations of the alternative theoretical framework that I propose. Then, the concepts are combined to set the parameters for operationalizing the framework in the study of individual case studies.

[7]In other words, the provision of selective incentives is still incorporated into this approach but simply not the sole focal point.

2.7 Sociological literature on collective action

2.7.1 Literature on social movements[8]

The analysis of collective behavior (of which the analysis of *violent* collective behavior is a subset) has been a mainstay of sociological scholarship since the structural-functionalist school of thought that was preeminent in the 1960s. According to this paradigm, shifts in social transformations (especially at abrupt intervals of sweeping changes) resulted in a by-product of collective action. Social movements were therefore seen as pathologies, or as crises/challenges to the existing social framework due to the inability of social institutions to mitigate social discord. In addition, psychologically grounded theories in this tradition portrayed collective behavior as the result of feelings of deprivation and/or marginalization on the part of individuals guiding their decision-making process to participate. There is an obvious conceptual link between general structural theories of collective behavior and early theories of protest and revolution as a direct result of grievance accumulation such as the work of Ted Gurr[9]. The latter relied on the concept of shared grievances leading to the formulation of a shared ideological core and then to collective behavior in the form of sociopolitical movements that aim to address those grievances. Moreover, the recent debate over the causal

[8]For historical overviews of the literature on social movements see McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2001, 38-71) and Della Porta and Diani (2006).

[9]See Gurr (1970) for the foundations; for an updated formulation see Gurr (2000).

mechanisms of civil war onset as a dichotomy of greed or grievance can be framed as the theoretical consequent of the same foundations.

In contrast to such structural approaches, there are a number of approaches that can be broadly categorized under the analytical umbrella of assuming rationality, purposeful action, and organizational capacity on the part of social movements. One major theoretical strand in this tradition is the resource-mobilization paradigm, emphasizing the presence of opportunities for collective behavior and the organizational capability to mobilize. The term is largely attributed to the work of McCarthy and Zald (see, inter alia, 1977) which shifted the focus away from the social psychology of collective behavior towards a more explicitly sociopolitical framework of organization that places the aggregation of resources (more specifically, labor and capital) at its core.

2.7.2 Literature on social networks

Marwell, Oliver, and Prahl (1988) examine the link between the strength of a pre-existing social network and the ability of an organization to overcome collective action free-riding problems. They find that the higher the density of pre-existing social ties the better the prospects for undertaking collective action. Moreover, they also find that the centralization of network ties always has a positive effect on collective action and that the costs associated with organization are proportional to group heterogeneity; as the organization draws from a more

homogeneous pool, it can identify and selectively recruit individuals with a higher probability of overall contribution.

Gould (1993) re-iterates the primacy of the centralization of network ties on organizational strength and successful collective action but also focuses on the structural positions of individual contributors on the overall level of contribution. He concludes that individual contribution is routed through norms, efficacy concerns, and social structures. McAdam and Paulsen (1993) provide a framework for recruitment on the basis of four fundamental conditions that are largely similar to concepts outlined above. They argue that successful recruitment requires a specific recruitment attempt, a linkage between the prospective recruits identity and participation (ideological and/or goal-oriented), a support network that can sustain and reinforce that specific linkage, and the absence of countervailing linkages to other salient identities.

The idea of placing particular attention to the formulation and intricacies of selective incentives and disincentives is nothing new. Oliver (1980) makes the argument that positive and negative incentives are analytically dissimilar because the relationship between individual cost and group size is variable. She concludes that "negative incentives are *essential* for ensuring unanimous cooperation in costly collective action" (1980, 1373). Snow et al. highlight "the importance of social networks as a conduit for the spread of social movements" (1980, 790). They find that the probability of recruitment is largely determined

by preexisting interpersonal ties between existing group members and prospective recruits and the existence or absence of competing networks. Klandermans and Oegema (1987) identify the four fundamental aspects of mobilization as: *mobilization potential*, or the subset of people who could be mobilized within a society that stands to gain by achievement of the movements goals, *recruitment networks* that reach individuals within that subset, *motivation to participate* at the individual level as a function of perceived costs and benefits associated with participation, and the *barriers to participation*.

McAdam (1983, 735) emphasizes the need for shifting emphasis away from the analysis of origins and causes of insurgency (typically rendered static by the analytical tools employed) towards a more dynamic approach that highlights movement development and decline. Klandermans (1984) draws attention to a fundamental feature of the social dilemma faced by potential contributors to a collective benefit; that at the specific moment of making the decision to participate, each participant has expectations about the likely actions of every other potential participant (and uses those expectations to formulate their own cost-benefit analysis and estimate their own utility from participation) but is ultimately uncertain about the actual overall level of participation. Thus, Klandermans reformulates the collective action problem as a coordination dilemma; individuals will be more willing to participate if they expect others will do likewise. Thus, membership in a preexisting

social network that facilitates the dissemination of information, thereby converging expected outcomes and actual ones, increases the likelihood of successful mobilization with both the collective and the selective incentives from cooperation held constant. Conversely, Oliver (1984) analyzes a framework where there are diminishing marginal returns from contribution to a collective good (a property which is inversely proportional to the overall size of the participation population; for example, participation in neighborhood collective goods) such that initial contributions make a marked and easily perceivable difference and subsequent contributions have increasingly less significant impact. She argues that in such cases, "rational individuals take account of the likelihood that the collective good will be provided through the efforts of others, and they are less likely to contribute the more they believe others will" (1984, 609).

McAdam (1986) makes the crucial distinction between participation in low- and high-risk activism. Furthermore, he emphasizes the importance of pre-existing supportive networks and the prominent role of ideological inclination among group members as well as prior history of activism.

Snow et al. (1986, 464) argue that frame alignment - defined as the linkage between the "interpretive orientations" of individuals and Social Movement Organizations (SMOs) "such that some set of individual interests, values and beliefs and SMO activities, goal and ideology

are congruent and complementary" - is a necessary precondition for participation. Therefore, success in mobilization requires the utilization of preexisting linkages, the alteration of such linkages to suit an emergent political identity, the generation of new linkages, or a combination of the above.

2.8 Literature on social norms

The theoretical literature on social norms as explanatory variables for collective action lies at the nexus of various research areas. It includes work done by theoretical economists, game theorists, evolutionary biologists, anthropologists, sociologists as well as political scientists. Comparatively speaking, political science represents the least of the bulk of this work. Fehr and Fischbacher (2004, 185) two of the leading figures in this research area define social norms as "standards of behavior that are based on widely shared beliefs [about] how individual group members ought to behave in a given situation" and, of course, that definition presupposes that failure to act in accordance with the norm is subject to punishment. In terms of overcoming the collective action problem, social norms are considered essential because in the absence of some norm that deviates from what is known as rational egoism in the Prisoner's Dilemma game the dominant strategy will always be that of mutual defection. In other words, for players to have an incentive to deviate

from the dominant strategy there must be an overriding principle to which they adhere such as 'you should not free-ride and take advantage of your fellow members.' While strict adherence to such deontological principles would be sufficient to shift the outcome from the equilibrium of mutual defection to mutual cooperation, it is rarely the case that social norms are obeyed solely due to their moral force.

The most consistent approach towards understanding human cooperation through social norms is through the norm of conditional cooperation. Conditionality specifically refers to the maxim of 'cooperate if others cooperate, defect if others defect.' In other words, the heuristic algorithm at work is to reciprocate the behavior of others regardless of whether it is positive or negative.[10] Early efforts that focused on this norm emphasized either kinship (Hamilton 1964) or reciprocity[11] (Axelrod and Hamilton 1981; Trivers 1971). However, as Boyd and Richerson (1988) illustrate, these mechanisms are insufficient to maintain cooperation as group membership rises beyond small groups.[12] Consequently, many new

[10]There is some procedural ambiguity in this framing, since it implies that decision-making is sequential, while most discussions based on the Prisoner's Dilemma assume simultaneity. However, it is also the case that a framework of social norms can only operate through iteration, which suggests that this is a learning process through the revelation of previously private information about other players' preferences which is consistent with the theoretical device of the n-player iterated Prisoners' Dilemma game. By iterated, we mean that the game is repeated a number of times that is unknown to the players, in which case backwards induction (figuring out what to do the last time, and the penultimate time, and so on) is insufficient for them to devise a dominant strategy.

[11]It should be noted that many theorists use tit-for-tat (usually shortened to TFT), reciprocity, reciprocal altruism and conditional cooperation interchangeably.

[12]This relationship is exponentially inverse to group size as it increases from 10 to 100 to 1000 members and beyond.

approaches have been introduced in the attempt to explain specifically human sociality, since cooperation in this sphere occurs in very large numbers among largely unrelated individuals. Nowak and Sigmund (1993) argue that a strategy of 'Win-Stay, Lose-Shift' outperforms 'Tit-for-Tat' in the iterated Prisoners' Dilemma Game.[13] The strategy entails that those who do badly are able to observe those who do better and adopt their strategies accordingly over time. This development has led to the consideration of mechanisms of social learning that facilitate the adoption of common and successful behaviors.

The two most common themes in this research area are the concepts of payoff-biased (Bowles 2004) or, relatedly, prestige-biased transmission (Henrich and Gil-White 2001) and conformist transmission (Boyd and Richerson 1985, Henrich and Boyd 1998). The first two are roughly analogous to the social rule of "copy those that you observe to be successful" (hence the emphasis on higher payoffs and prestige) and the latter to "copy what the majority does."[14] The most significant difference between the two is that while conformity may be regarded as a public good in itself (where individuals have an incentive to free-ride), the pursuit of higher payoffs and/or prestige may lead to within-group competition due to scarcity. This is especially true in the case of prestige which may be

[13]The 'Win-Stay, Lose-Shift' strategy is usually referred to as 'Pavlov' due to the conditional learning that the strategy involves.

[14]Note that conformist transmission is not the same as normative conformity which is adopting the conventional choice so as to avoid potential consequences by standing out; rather, conformist transmission assumes that the popularity of a choice is assessed as an indirect measure of its worth, thereby resulting in its adoption.

considered as a positional good, hence the more one possesses within a finite population, the less everyone else may possess in relation to that individual. Thus, cooperation in such cases is not evolutionary stable (Henrich and Boyd 2001, 81).

Two solutions to the problem of evolutionary instability in culturally transmitted social norms have dominated recent scholarship: costly signaling and punishment. Both concepts are based on the idea that mechanisms that are individually costly can be mutually or collectively beneficial (Bowles, Choi, and Hopfensitz 2003). According to Gintis, Smith, and Bowles (2001, 103) costly signaling constitutes an honest signal of the member's quality, and therefore results in advantageous alliances for those signaling in this manner.[15] The quality that is being revealed can be either cooperative or competitive; in other words, a member may reveal information about his fitness as a partner or as a competitor. Either way, revealing information ought to decrease transaction costs that would otherwise be incurred through experimentation in both the selection mechanism and the selection itself. The authors assert that the collective benefit of the mechanism is powerful enough that it can overcome the collective action problem even without repetition or other associative attributes such as the relative extent of kinship. They show that

[15]The authors define quality as those attributes that are neither immediately apparent (i.e. they constitute private information) nor easily assessed (i.e. even if one claims to possess these qualities, it may simply be 'cheap-talk') but have a significant effect on the payoffs from social interaction.

non-cooperation becomes a sub-optimal strategy when signaling benefits are incorporated into the interaction.

This modeling process accurately captures the dynamics involved in group membership for the pursuit of political goals through the use of organized violence (and the authors seem to agree since they propose group raiding or defense as possible applications). In fact, *performance in warfare* is the public good provided by active participants as a way of proving their worth. Interestingly enough, the provision of this good is central to the provision of the higher-order public goods game in which the group aims at achieving its political goals which in itself is the primary collective action problem. There are some striking similarities between this framework and the theoretical models of overcoming adverse selection problems due to asymmetric information presented above. High Quality Signalers should have lower marginal costs of signaling, since they should be better at performing the provision of the public good once asked to do so. Therefore, bluffing is discouraged by coupling performance to reputation. Costly signaling provides an evolutionary stable equilibrium when: high-quality individuals are neither too common (which would render the mechanism of little consequence) or too rare (which would render the mechanism cost ineffective), and the cost of signaling is sufficiently marginally lower for high-quality individuals than for low-quality individuals.

The second major category of solutions is the punishment of defection through selectively targeted sanctions. There is considerable experimental evidence (Fehr and Gachter 2000; 2002; Yamagishi 1986; 1988) suggesting that the credible threat of third-party sanctions has a considerable effect on eliminating defection. However, the literature on sanctions has spawned an interesting offshoot in trying to explain the motives behind sanctions. Briefly, the argument is that the credibility of the threat of sanctions is a public goods problem in itself, in the sense that if the threat is credible no punisher has the incentive to actually contribute to its provision. This, therefore, leads to a second-order social dilemma where punishment of non-punishers is needed in order to secure the punishment of defectors. Naturally, this leads to an n^{th}-order similar problem leading to an infinite regress whereby higher levels of monitoring of lower orders are always required. Two solutions to the problem are: 1) that a combination of payoff-biased and conformist transmission stabilizes punishment at some specific n^{th}-order depending on the parameters of the interaction (Henrich and Boyd 2001); and 2) that sanctions are non-selfish in the strict sense of self-interest. The second of the two has led to a somewhat controversial initiative, whose findings are by no means universally accepted, to establish the innate characteristics of humans that lead to the meta-level social norm of punishment as a strong preference. For example, Carlsmith and Darley (2002) argue that just desert is a much more powerful motive than deterrence in human

propensity to punishment.[16] Other approaches model the propensity towards fairness (Rabin 1993) or spitefulness (Rabin 1998) as driving forces for punishers to act. Interestingly, neurobiological experiments (Rilling et al. 2002; Sanfey et al. 2003) report findings that are consistent with the assumptions of these models. The same experiments also suggest that emotions may also play a decisive role in such decision-making processes.

2.9 Norms, networks, and information

Beyond the problems already identified above, the most significant shortcoming of traditional accounts of collective action is inefficiency; they do not distinguish between potential participants, therefore not allowing for the potential to differentiate in terms of quality and thus concluding that selective incentives are both necessary and singular as a requirement for successful cooperation. Information can fundamentally alter the internal dynamic of the interaction by allowing for this differentiation. Models of asymmetric information address this problem in an attempt to reduce inefficiency and optimize recruitment into collective groups. The usage of social network analysis in sociology of movements and organizations provides social-based applications of these mechanisms. Models of social norm transmission employ a similar

[16] The argument is much more controversial in other applications; for example, capital punishment may be justified as being merely an appropriate punishment even if it has no deterrent effect. The argument is still relevant to my research agenda, though, since appeals to just desert can mobilize participation.

rationale in explaining formation, propagation and monitoring standards of behavior that make cooperation mutually beneficial. This section applies this theoretical progression to a framework intended for specific application to recruitment by VPOs.

Theoretical conceptualizations of group-level cooperation are generally abstract and not necessary manifested in real life applications. As stated above, norms as exhibited in human society must necessarily overcome the problem of large numbers where transmission of the norms may not be monitored in strict and absolute terms but in vague general terms, for example as long-standing traditions rather than explicit standards of behavior. The most important consideration for this study is whether rules of conduct constrain behavior in significant and observable long-term patterns. After all, the focus of this study is not the emergence of such norms, their specificity, or the rationale for their choice over other competing norms. Rather, the focus is on their effect on the ability of societal sub-groups to organize themselves and recruit other members of their society to engage in behavior that is beneficial to the sub-group. Thus, the parameter of measurement is the instrumental usage of pre-existing social norms by organizations of political violence. The extent to which VPOs will be able to use the norms to facilitate recruitment is largely beyond their control, since the specific nature of the norms is the result of long-term societal evolutionary processes and unlikely to be transformable in the short-run. However, in the short-run

they may very well be malleable in specific ways that VPOs can utilize to reframe long-standing patterns of behavior to their own ends[17].

Both solutions (costly signaling and punishment) provided by the social norms literature to the problem of evolutionary instability equilibria of what are essentially large-scale public goods games should be directly observable in practical applications of the theoretical framework. As already stated, the theoretical concepts of costly signaling in social norm transmission and asymmetric information models bear remarkable conceptual resemblance. Their application to theories of organized political violence is relatively straightforward.

In the theoretical framework that I propose, recruits are the signalers who signal their quality as fighters to the organization. The organization would like to expend as few resources as possible on finding the recruits since those resources will be better utilized by limiting their expenditure to those who become active combatants. In addition, since monitoring is costly, it should be the case that the organization will try to minimize the cost of monitoring both recruits and active combatants. If the organization can accomplish this by using information already available within the social network, then it can lower both its recruiting costs and its operational costs. At the same time, the level of cohesion of the social network has an effect on the probability that low quality

[17]The same logic permeates work on the opportunities for ethnonationalist persuasion that democratization and insecurity afford to political elites; see de Figueiredo and Weingast (1999) and Snyder (2000).

recruits will bluff; the more cohesive the social network, the lower the probability of dishonest signaling since more information is available on each potential recruit. As already stated, since the tasks that recruits will be asked to perform as members are combat-related, it is very difficult to assess them based on past performance even with a social network to provide information. Except for the case of recurrence of war, most combatants will not have participated in these tasks, especially since most of the targeted recruits are likely to be young males. Thus, the degree to which long-standing traditions of social norms that exhibit combat-related characteristics affects the availability of information to VPOs that is directly applicable to successful recruitment.

Moreover, the degree to which monitoring of how such norms function in a specific sociopolitical environment can be utilized by VPOs for the purposes of recruitment - and also operational monitoring and evaluation of performance - is largely dependent upon the specific structural characteristic of the social network. The structure of the network can account for variation along the following parameters: the dissemination of information, the efficiency in coordination among its members, the adaptation of strategies and tactics over time, the harmonization of expectations of members vis-a-vis the actions of all other members.

2.9.1 Observable parameters/hypotheses

The analysis presented above yields some hypotheses to be stated through application to specific case studies in the following chapters.

Hypothesis 1: Broad social norms of expected behavior make both the organization and conduct of political violence less costly.

The extent to which rules of conduct permeate the sociopolitical environment within which VPOs operate may favor both recruitment and operation by: facilitating monitoring and enforcement, discouraging defection from participation, and discouraging deviation from expected behavior within society at large, even beyond those actively involved in the organization.

Hypothesis 2: Traditions that favor characteristics of combat-related behavior make the organization of political violence less costly.

More specifically, social norms that constrain behavior in ways that are easily transferable to combat favor VPOs in a variety of ways: they reveal fitness information of individuals, reduce transaction costs, discourage bluffing, and minimize resource expenditure.

Hypothesis 3: The structure of the social network affects both of the above.

The structure of the social network defines the way in which these mechanisms work in a specific sociopolitical environment. The

strength of social ties, closeness of network sub-groups, and the relationship between the structure of the network and the structure of VPO are significant determinants of the ability of the VPO to constrain the behavior of both its potential and active participants.

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter presents an alternative framework for defining and understanding the recruitment mechanisms of organizations of political violence. The framework critiques traditional accounts of collective action and integrates various conceptual elements from other theoretical literatures to provide solutions to existing limitations. In the following chapters, the hypotheses presented above are tested through application to case study analyses of the organization of political violence in the conflicts in Chechnya and Sierra Leone.

Chapter 3

Case Study: Chechnya

3.1 Introduction

The Russo-Chechen War can serve as an illustrative example of many important observed trends that have concerned political scientists in recent years. It can be characterized as: a case study of secessionist movement for self-determination (Bowker 2004; Khalilov 2003; Wood 2007), a case study of ethnic conflict within the broader context of the post-Cold War Era (Williams 2001), a case study of transnational terrorism within the context of the 'War on Terror' (Alexseev 2002; Cornell 2003), or simply as a 'Clash of Civilizations' in Huntington's (1992; 1996) framework that has had broader appeal and acceptance within the political sphere in the post-9/11 world[1].

[1] See Cornell (1998) for a challenge to the 'Clash of Civilizations' interpretation of the conflicts in the Caucasus region.

Furthermore, the underlying causes of the conflict can be (and have been) described using a variety of theoretical frameworks: as the result of the political transformation of the Russian elite in the aftermath of the dissolution of the Soviet Union (Gall and de Waal 1998), as an effect of the contestation over regional geopolitics of oil and other concerns in the greater Caucasus region (Baev, Koehler and Zurcher 2002; Cheterian 2001), as the outcome of the relationship between Russian and Chechen leaders with an emphasis on personal animosities (Dunlop 1998), or as the byproduct of political corruption on both sides (McFaul 2000). Evidently, there is no shortage of explanations as to the causal mechanisms that led to the outbreak of the conflict.

This chapter focuses primarily on a specific aspect of the conflict that has been broadly characterized as a transformation from nationalism in the First War to *jihad* in the Second War[2]. The chapter presents the argument that the conflict did not simply change in the inter-war period but that it evolved throughout the entire process[3]. In other

[2]I use the labels First and Second Russo-Chechen Wars following convention within the literature. The First War describes the period between December 1994 and August 1996 as the starting and ending points of armed conflict, even though the formal peace treaty was signed in May 1997. The specific dates of the Second War are harder to define but common convention points to the second Russian invasion of Chechnya in September 1999 as the starting point and, of course, the ending point has yet to be reached. Many analysts, including the majority of the Chechen population, reject the above formulation and regard the war as one continuous process. While I tend to prefer this approach in terms of a more comprehensive analysis of the conflict, I will retain the separation of the two periods as a way to illustrate changes in strategies, tactics, and recruitment patterns between the First War and Second War period.

[3]See Hughes (2001; 2007) for a broader interpretation of the causes of the two Wars that reaches the same conclusions.

words, the conflict can be understood as two episodes of one drawn-out confrontation where some attributes that drove the organization of political violence waxed or waned in significance over time. Therefore, while the commonly-made distinction between the two Wars - that characterizes the First as a nationalist war of independence and the Second as a "Holy War" - is useful, it can create the misleading impression of two distinct and fundamentally different processes. The chapter presents the argument that the elements that defined the religious character of the Second War either resulted from the First War (directly or indirectly), or were actually in place during the First War but had not yet become defining characteristics.

3.2 Historical overview of the conflict

The breakdown of the Soviet Empire in December of 1991, following a three-year period of reforms enacted by the Secretary General of the Communist Party of the USSR Mikhail Gorbachev, finalized the establishment of independence of the fifteen former constituent republics. While the process of dissolution had been marked by increasing claims to sovereignty within each constituent republic during the transitional period, the end result was by and large politically stable and remarkably bloodless. Some conflicts did flare in the regional reordering of borders, most notably the secessionist struggles of Abkhazia and South

Ossetia within the newly-established state of Georgia, and the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh. Yet, by and large, the reconfigured Russian Federation enjoyed a process of largely peaceful transition.[4]

Even though the emerging political order in Moscow was seen as considerably weakened in relation to the former stronghold of the Supreme Soviet, the blueprint for claims to independence that the process of dissolution provided did not translate into widespread appeals to self-determination among the autonomous republics except for one crucial case, that of Chechnya.[5] With tragic repercussions felt far beyond the relatively narrow borders of Chechnya, the Russo-Chechen conflict remains unresolved to this day. It has resulted in destabilizing tendencies throughout the Caucasus and especially in the neighboring republics of Dagestan and Ingushetia, and has been both cause and effect of political machinations in Moscow that have lead to the rise and fall of many prominent figures, none more spectacular than the meteoric rise of Vladimir Putin. Tragically, Chechnya has also served as international spectacle of a macabre theater of human suffering after years of horrendous human rights violations by both sides. While the Chechen

[4]The Russian Federation consisted of Russia and the autonomous republics of the former Russian SFSR (Soviet Federated Socialist Republic): Bashkortostan, Buryatia, Chechnya and Ingushetia, Chuvashia, Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, Kalmykia, Karelia, Komi, Mari El, Mordovia, North Ossetia-Alania, Tatarstan, Tuva, Udmurtia, and Sakha (Yakutia).

[5]Vladimir Putin would later revitalize the theory that a secession would lead to a post-Soviet domino effect in reference to Chechnya.

state retains a patina of de facto independence, internal divisions, a stagnant economy ravaged by the war as well as rampant corruption, and the extended disruption of most provisions of public goods and services continue to subject the Chechen population to a life of hardship and diminished future prospects.[6]

Opposition to Russian authority coalesced around the person (and persona) of General Dzhokhar Dudayev, a product of the Soviet Red Army who was married to an ethnic Russian and for years had concealed his Chechen identity and heritage. In light of this fact, Dudayev's transformation into a staunch nationalist is all the more remarkable and points to what many have characterized as Dudayev's selective and instrumental assumption of a new identity. In line with this hard-line approach was the instrumental usage of the historical past - by portraying the continued coexistence between Chechnya and Russia as untenable based on a long history of conflict - as a catalyst for war by Dudayev as well as others who adopted this approach and came to lead the drive for self-determination. Thus, the Chechen leadership was able to shift emphasis from the proximate causes of the war to characterizing the present outbreak as merely the latest episode in a long-standing conflict that had been waging for more than three centuries.

While the claim is tenuous at best and was clearly intended to provide the necessary focal point and rally-cry for coordination, a look at

[6]For a report on the problematic process of post-conflict reconstruction in Chechnya, see Tishkov 2000.

the historical record seemed to validate the claim in the eyes of Chechens, especially in the case of a nation as bound by historical collective memory as Chechnya. The history of Russo-Chechen relations is littered with episodes that came to define a pattern of interaction that carried over into the present conflict; ill-fated Russian attempts to invade and civilize the barbaric highlander Chechens provoked overwhelming responses that bordered on the barbaric, in turn reinforcing the Russian image of Chechens. However, for Chechens, these episodes solidified into a form of lore that came to define their social interactions especially with regards to the exhibition of leadership; one common characteristic in all cases was a figure that combined military prowess, religious fervor and strengthening of ethnic ties. Sheikh Mansur's rout of Catherine the Great's invading forces in 1785 represents the first such incident.[7]

The relationship between Muslims and Soviet leadership was tenuous throughout the Soviet era. The promises of the Communist doctrine of separation of church and state, respect for all religions, and integration on the basis of a common sociopolitical ethos that transcended ethnic and religious cleavages never fully materialized. In fact, no episode of strife left a more indelible mark on the collective memory of Chechens and the sentiment of Russian subjugation than the deportations carried out by the Stalinist regime in 1944. The effects

[7] It is an interesting recurring trend that these figures that rise to nearly mythical status tend to have uncertain pasts. Little is known of Sheikh Mansur's past, not even if he was actually a Chechen. Even his name was assumed (it translates to 'Victorious'); his real name was Ushurma.

of the deportations are still analyzed today and for good reason. The dispersal of Chechens throughout the former Soviet Empire led to the creation of a Chechen diaspora since many Chechens never returned. Ties to the motherland were strengthened through a sense of shared suffering, and a strengthened animosity and mistrust of Russian authority has never subsided since. As a result, appeals to history by Dudayev and other Chechen nationalists in the early 1990s were not met with much resistance. (See Williams 2000)

3.2.1 The First Russo-Chechen War[8]

As described in the previous section. the autonomous republic of Chechen-Ingushetia declared its secession amidst the collapse of the Soviet Union in September 1991. Under the leadership of Dzhokhar Dudayev, the Chechen Republic of Ingushetia achieved de facto independence without the recognition of the Russian government. After a period of protracted negotiations that resulted in a series of breakdowns the First Chechen War began in December 1994 with the Russian invasion of Chechnya. Meanwhile, Dudayev's stronghold on power had been consolidated over the past three years after decisive crushes of opposing factions.

[8]There are many good historical accounts of the conflict; Gall and de Waal's (1998) remains the authoritative source on the First War, while Tishkov (2004) incorporates the inter-war period and the lead-up to the Second War.

Russia's expectation in entering the war was a quick and decisive victory; the vastly superior resources of the Russian Army were in no way comparable to the limited firepower of the newly established breakaway state whose hardware mainly consisted of requisitioned Soviet materiel. Top Kremlin officials such as Oleg Bolov (Secretary of the Kremlin Security Council) referred to the upcoming campaign as a "short victorious war" in allusion to a statement made in 1904 by the Russian Minister of the Interior Vyacheslav Plehve in reference to the Russo-Japanese War that was intended to avert the Russian Revolution; the war ended in catastrophe for the Russian Army and, contrary to expectation, fueled rather than abetted popular unrest. The tragic irony of the analogy may have been lost on Lobov at the time, but its portentous foreshadowing would soon become apparent. Perhaps as a result of overoptimism, the Russian Army was ill-prepared for what lay ahead; the guerrilla warfare that ensued favored the highly-mobile self-contained bands of Chechen fighters over the sluggish mechanized Russian Army. As the conflict dragged on, the Russian Army's response to the humiliating losses - especially to what was perceived as a much inferior force - was an overwhelming one; regular carpet bombing air strikes and artillery shelling resulted in indiscriminate casualties among both Chechen and Russian non-combatants.

On New Year's Eve of 1995, heavy Russian bombardment of the capital city of Grozny marked the opening salvo in the First Battle of

Grozny. Moving into the city with Armored Personnel Carriers (APCs) and mechanized infantry, the Russians were stunned by bitter opposition. Not only did the resistance come from the Chechen regulars under the command of former Soviet Colonel (and later Chechen President) Aslan Maskhadov but also - and perhaps most significantly - from irregular militias that operated covertly and independently in urban guerrilla warfare. That first Russian foray into Grozny had devastating effects that were to shape the ensuing conflict in significant ways. First of all, it destroyed the initial estimation that a quick and decisive victory was possible and any potential exuberance that went along with that overoptimism. Moreover, the inability of the Russian forces to fight the Chechens on the ground had an immediate demoralizing effect on troops that did not seem to be convinced of the necessity of this war to begin with. The mounting numbers of civilian casualties polarized public opinion within Russia and throughout the world as international observers looked on in disbelief, and it galvanized Chechen public opinion into a relatively unified oppositional force. After a hasty retreat from the Chechen capital to cut their losses, the Russians responded with a protracted barrage of bombardments over the next few months. Unwilling, and indeed unable, to face the Russian Army in open battle, Dudayev's forces also pulled out of the city and into more mountainous terrain; Russia assumed control of the city on March 7 of 1995.

During the rest of the conflict the Chechen forces increasingly retreated to the Southern part of Chechnya where mountainous terrain facilitated the use of ambush tactics with small mobile units. Both sides relied increasingly on the strategies that proved to work best for them; the Russians on heavy bombardments and air strikes, the Chechens on guerrilla tactics both within urban areas and through quick strikes and retreats from mountainous outposts. As casualties escalated, so did the ferocity of the tactics. Russian strikes became increasingly indiscriminate, amidst growing allegations of human rights abuses against Chechen civilians. The Chechens adopted terrorist tactics such as hostage taking and beheading of prisoners. Concurrently, the conflict assumed an increasingly religious tone with frequent pronouncements of *Jihad* against the invading Federal forces. The first terrorist attack that had a profound and lasting impact on the course of events was the Budyonnovsk crisis of June 14-18 of 1995. Shamil Basayev, Chechen leader of the 'Abkhaz Battalion', so-named due to its participation in the Abkhaz secession movement from Georgia (1992-1993), crossed the Russo-Chechen border with a force of about 150 fighters and made his way to the city of Buyonnovsk. After a skirmish with local Russian forces in the town center, the fighters retreated to the city hospital where they held more than 1,500 hostages for four days[9]. After unsuccessful raids by Russian

[9]This number includes patients and hospital personnel. There are conflicting reports of the actual number with some suggesting close to 2000 hostages. The number reported here is a generally accepted conservative estimate.

anti-terrorist units and tense negotiations, Basayev and his men were guaranteed safe passage back to Chechnya with 150 hostages to be released upon their return. The event had a profound effect on how the conflict was generally perceived: it illustrated that Chechen forces were capable of incursions into Russia and that Russian forces were ill-prepared to respond to unconventional threats. In turn, these led to growing confidence among the Chechen forces and general population and growing discontent among their Russian counterparts. Furthermore, the event solidified Basayev's reputation.

3.2.2 Inter-war period and onset of Second War

On April 23 of 1996, Chechen President Dudayev was killed by a Russian missile strike after triangulating his position while he was on a satellite phone; leadership passed on to then Chief of Staff Aslan Maskhadov who himself narrowly escaped assassination only days earlier. Yet these targeted attempts did little to change the accelerating transformation of the conflict as Chechen groups were able to engage in their unconventional tactics freely. Finally, on August 6 of 1996, the Chechens launched a major offensive on Grozny and other urban areas that swiftly led to the recapture of the capital. A Russian counter-offensive over the next four days in the form of a siege was unsuccessful in retaking the city. Protracted fighting amidst continued negotiations between Maskhadov and Russian General Lebed resulted in the signing of the

Khasavyurt Accord on August 30 bringing an end to the war in the form of a ceasefire but no real settlement to the question of Chechnya's status in terms of sovereignty.

The inter-war period between 1996 and 1999 was marked by social, political, and economic stagnation in Chechnya. The Maskhadov administration was unsuccessful in establishing a viable political system with functioning institutions. Thus, the promise of social and economic welfare predicted by Dudayev at the outset did not come to fruition. At the same time, the administration did not establish that fundamental characteristic of statehood: the monopoly over the legitimate use of force in its territory. Wartime groups did not relinquish control over their local areas and the radicalization on the basis of Islamism accelerated and grew in influence.

The Second Chechen War was initiated by the very same group that helped bring the First one to an end; on August 7 of 1999, Basayev led an incursion of about 500 of his fighters into Dagestan with the intention of drawing the neighboring state into the conflict. The ultimate goal was to create a pan-Caucasian Islamic state. The Russian response was swift and within the month the incursion was repelled. Prime Minister Putin, bolstered by the support of public opinion for a war that had taken anti-terrorist overtones, took decisive action in escalating the conflict within Chechnya with massive air strikes in urban areas. Replicating their strategy from the First War, Chechen forces retreated to the mountainous

South and used similar unconventional tactics of ambushes and raids on Russian forces with small, mobile units. At the same time, the increasing use of terrorist tactics by various Chechen groups belied the shifting ideological basis: suicide terrorism, kidnappings, executions, and an emphasis on Islamist rhetoric.

Two hostage crises have had a profound effect on public perception of the renewed conflict both within Russia and worldwide: the Dubrovka Moscow theater crisis on October 23 of 2002, and the Beslan school massacre on September 1 of 2004, for both of which Basayev ultimately claimed responsibility. In the first case, a group of more than fifty Chechen militants (including eighteen 'black widows', Chechen women who participated in terrorist attacks including suicide attacks after their husbands or sons were killed during the conflict) took about 850 hostages demanding the unconditional withdrawal of Russian forces from Chechnya. Russian special forces raided the building after releasing a gas agent into the theater's ventilation system killing most of the hostage-takers as well as more than a hundred hostages. In the second case, a rebel group held a school of more than a thousand children and adults hostage in Beslan, a town in the neighboring republic of North Ossetia. After a three-day siege, an (allegedly accidental) explosion inside the school and a raid by the Russian special forces, between 300-400 hostages died either at the scene or at local hospitals that were woefully unprepared for such an event.

3.3 Discussion of conditions/measurements of variables

3.3.1 Components of Chechen society

Chechens possess a strong sense of pride about the uniqueness and obscurity of their social origins, a factor that when combined with their geographical placement in a rugged mountainous area has created an aura of both physical and psychological unapproachability. Chechens refer to themselves as *Nokhchi* and to their closely related neighbors the Ingush as *Galgai* (Chechnya and Ingushetia are both Russian derivatives of place names); collectively, they are the *Vainakh* peoples and the territory that they have traditionally occupied is referred to by the Turkic name of *Ichkeria*. The native Chechen language is also quite unique: it is part of the Nakh family of Northeast Caucasian languages (which only has two other members, Ingush and Bats), exhibits very complex phonology, and bears little resemblance to other languages, even to those that are classified under other families of the Caucasian language tree.[10]

The history of Islam in Chechnya is no less unique; Chechens are categorized under one of two *Sufi* sects, either the *Naqshbandiya* or the *Qadiriya*. Sufism, as the mystical tradition of Islam, is differentiated even

[10] A fascinating detail is that very few words (less than 3,000) are classified as having true Chechen origins. Most of the contemporary Chechen vocabulary is derived from a variety of sources that exhibit the interactions of the Chechen people with various influences over the years, mainly Russian, Turkic and Georgian - due to geographical proximity - and, of course, Arabic as the liturgical language of Islam.

further in the Chechen case by a long-term amalgamation of religion to local customs to the extent that the resulting ethnoreligious character is inseparable from both. As a result, the impact of religion on the conflict has been much debated. Chechens were never religious in a strict academic sense and Chechen customs deviated significantly from Islamic law in many respects. This makes the influence of Wahhabism and the resulting change in the basis of recruitment from nationalism to religion between the First and Second Russo-Chechen Wars all the more interesting.

Chechen society is characterized by some unique traits: an almost total lack of social class stratification and an alternative clan-based social structure composed of *teips*, a tradition of collective decision-making in small territorially-based units with elder preeminence, and the evolution of a multitude of *adats*, social customary laws that have traditionally taken precedence over civil laws. Ultimately, the organization of the war effort as a response to the Russian threat exhibited the importance of these features in mounting a successful campaign; in fact, I argue that these preexisting characteristics formed the conditions that favored Chechen success in the conflict.

3.4 Differences between the two wars

3.4.1 The role of social networks and norms in the First War

Two basic stereotypes have been traditionally upheld in Chechen society: that of the revered elder and that of the virile young warrior. Both stereotypes (male in gender) have had an enduring effect on Chechen social identity. Given the historical lack of class-based distinctions or other hierarchical social orders throughout Chechen history, the loose hierarchy provided by these stereotypes (which are intrinsically interwoven with the traditions of *adat* discussed below) is all the more vital. Where the two stereotypes coincided, they served to create powerful archetypes that persevered in the Chechen psyche as models of heroism to be replicated in times of need. The most prominent example of such an archetype is that of the religious leader and military commander Imam Shamil who waged war against the invading Russian forces from the 1830s until his surrender in 1859[11]. Shamil was a religiously fanatic despot who terrorized both opponents and dissenting allies. Alongside his military achievements, which came against seemingly overwhelming odds, Shamil also established a mythical reputation for escaping certain death; twice he was cornered, injured and presumed dead (once in 1832

[11]For a comprehensive listing of resources on this historical episode, see Gammer (2002).

and then again in 1839) only to resurface shortly afterward. This ability to withstand personal injury in a stoic manner has since been considered as almost miraculous among those who regard themselves as his cultural descendants.[12]

Lieven (1998, 118) provides two accounts that exemplify the dual traditions of reverence for one's elders and for the virility of warrior youths, and the passage of those traditions from one generation to the next. Idris Dokayev, the local group leader in the town of Alkhan Yurt, explained that "even at fifteen, a boy here is expected to know how to handle weapons. In most families, at that age the father will give his son a pistol, and will teach him how to use it and how to look after it." Ramzan Selmirzayev explained that in his local group in the city of Vedeno "there are 20 of us, all relatives or friends. Every group chooses its own commander, or elder. He doesn't order us to fight, he doesn't need to. We all know why we are fighting, and for what. We don't have much contact with the high command. This isn't an army. It is the whole Chechen people who is fighting." This account further illustrates the lack of a strong hierarchical chain of command and the autonomy of action exhibited by small units during the First War.

Most observers of Chechen society are amazed by the lack of sociopolitical institutions to regulate interactions among Chechens.

[12]The infamous commander Shamil Basayev, is not only named after Imam Shamil but has also exhibited the same uncanny ability to elude capture and "return from the dead". For example, Basayev was pronounced dead by the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) during fighting in Malachi, the capital of the Russian state of Kabardino-Balkaria, in October 2005. The report was later retracted. He was killed in July 2006 amidst still unclear circumstances.

Throughout the existence of organized Chechen society, they have lacked the most basic of regulatory institutions, including a police and judicial system to enforce laws. In place of such institutions, there are numerous social norms that are strictly adhered to. All such norms are known as *adats* or customary laws and all are self-regulated within Chechen society. As Smith (1998, 22) states, "it seems contradictory, but the anarchic love of freedom coexists with strictly observed social laws."

An interesting fact is that the *adat* system predates organized religion in Chechnya. Many attempts to impose *Sharia* (Muslim) law on the Chechens have failed since many of the provisions of *Sharia* contradicted the pre-existing *adats*. For example, punishment in the *Sharia* system is usually public. However, under the *adat* system, punishment of individuals for defection from social norms is usually conducted within the family or imposed by elders. Even though religion tends to undermine the system, the adats have endured precisely because of their enforcement mechanisms. Over time, however, alternative means of organization around religious groups have developed in the form of religious brotherhoods known as *virds* in the Sufi denomination. While *virds* are not supposed to influence sociopolitical behavior and their influence is nominally restricted to religious affairs, they tend to have an ameliorative effect in assisting in the mediation of conflicts.

As already discussed above, historically there has been a lack of hierarchical society in Chechnya. Instead, there is a social network where

cells of membership intersect at various points starting with nuclear and extended family ties to regionalism and religious subdivision. However, no affiliation in the Chechen social network has been historically more important than clan affiliation. Chechen clans are known as *teips* and their origins are shrouded in myth and folklore. *Teips*, which number at close to 160 are collected into nine major groupings (known as *tukhums*). Each *teip* is further subdivided into *gars* which are groupings of 10-15 households or whole small villages (Seely 2001). *Teips* originate from common land ownership; therefore, they may be regarded as a commons' management mechanism. Thus, the *teip*'s affiliation with land (a necessarily immobile asset) creates strong bonds among extended families and even whole villages and reinforces the individual member's ties to the soil. Moreover, the *teip*'s identification with land facilitates exclusivity and exclusion; it is impossible for an individual to be a member of two *teips* at the same time. An individual can expect certain services purely on the basis of membership; thus, a *teip* is not only a social network, it is also a support network.

Perhaps, the most important distinction among teips is the geographical divide between the North and the South of Chechnya along the lines of mountain-*teips* and plains-*teips*. This division assumed an organizational character during the First War since the mountainous regions served as hideouts for rebel groups that fled the plains to reorganize, rest and then redeploy down into the plains. Thus, while

the battleground areas were concentrated in the North, the Southern mountainous regions served as bases for the Chechen armed groups.

The historical traditions of what a Chechen male should represent promote a martial culture where all males are considered potential fighters in times of need; in fact, exhibiting attributes that conform to such an image enhances one's reputation within the social network. This mechanism was conducive to recruitment during the First Russo-Chechen War since it provided the information necessary for participant selection in terms of fitness on a long-term basis. Moreover, the existence of a strict code of conduct under the *adat* system aligned Chechen behavior in conformity to a set of specific social norms that induced cooperation and punished defection on a broad societal level. All these features served to create a framework where the provision of selective benefits to potential participants was largely unnecessary.

However, it should be noted that there has also been a recent backlash to the idea that social networking - specifically using the *teip* as the unit of analysis - was a determining characteristic of the way in which conflict processes developed during the Russo-Chechen War. Dettmering's (2005) reassessment of the historical treatment of Chechen clan structures in the 19th century suggests that a reliance only on clan structure as an explanation for the organization of resistance can be misleading. Other significant determinants such as the effect of terrain on clan strength and their function as military units have been typically

disregarded by many analysts. An assessment of the organization of political violence in the First Russo-Chechen War exhibits both a similar dynamic in terms of observation of real events but also in terms of theoretical analysis. Many studies overemphasize the extent to which the structure itself determined the organization and conduct of political violence without paying proper attention to the interplay between terrain and clan structure as well as their effect on military conduct.

Recent research on the role of clan allegiance seems to suggest that Dettmering's conclusions are reflected in the current social configuration of Chechnya. Sokirianskaia's (2005) survey of recent (2002-2005) attitudes towards *teip* identification by Chechens presents an illuminating distinction typically lost in the simplistic reliance on the historical interpretation of clan structures. She finds that the role of the *teip* can be seen either in its symbolic and traditional form of blood ties and tribal entities, or in the colloquial sense of an extended family. She finds that the latter interpretation is much more salient in contemporary Chechen society, especially in terms of political-military groupings.

3.4.2 Organization of political violence in the First War

The military organization of Chechen resistance to the Russian invasion of 1994 presents a balance between two different organizing principles: at the top levels, the resistance resembled a 'regular' professional army, while at the lower levels sub-units operated in a dispersed quasi-hierarchical

manner, independently run by regional rebel leaders and engaging in guerrilla warfare, mostly in an urban setting. At the outset of the First War, there was little in the way of an organized army exhibiting the hierarchical structure of a conventional armed force; no more than 1,000 were under the command of Dudayev and Maskhadov in the form of a National Guard at the time of the Russian attack (Baev, Koehler, and Zurcher, 2002, 60). By comparison, the combined number of all irregular forces that resisted the initial invasion of Grozny is estimated between 5,000 and 7,000 (Gall and de Waal, 1998, 208). It is easy to see the decentralized nature of the organization of political violence in the First War. Baev, Koehler, and Zurcher (2002, 62) identify three major subdivisions of the Chechen resistance: the organized groups led by specific field commanders (such as Basayev) that participated full-time throughout the conflict, occasional units that coordinated their actions with the organized groups at different times, in which membership fluctuated depending on the perception of threat, and independent units usually organized for the purposes of defending individual villages. Out of the three types of Chechen VPOs, only the first type were active at the beginning of the Second War.

The *teip* structure was instrumental in recruitment in both Russo-Chechen wars, but especially the first one. Recruitment was broadly organized around *teip* lines; regional rebel leaders would draw from their own *teip* in order to create a group and then sustain it over time. As Lieven (1998, 325) cautions though, it should be noted that the *teip* in

itself is too loose an organizational structure in modern Chechnya to have served as the only mechanism that facilitated recruitment. Since most rebel groups were composed of volunteers, in most cases recruitment was achieved through nuclear and extended family connections. On the one hand, those must be considered as a subdivision of the *teip* (known as *gar*, which typically consists of 10-15 families situated in territorial proximity) which does not undermine the importance of the social network. On the other hand, a stronger lens must be employed in looking at the micro-level of recruitment. Arquilla and Karasik (1999, 209) agree that the formation of social structures around the teip affiliation played a very important role in the organization of the war effort in 1994[13]. As other analysts tend to do, they stress the especially important role of familial ties. They estimate that each *teip* would aim at recruiting a force of about 600 fighters with four units of 150 fighters each. Each unit would be subdivided into squads of 20; such squads would typically be composed either exclusively of family members or a combination of relatives and close neighbors. With the exception of larger units in urban areas, Chechen units were - as already indicated - small, mobile and highly decentralized. Arquilla and Karasik (1999, 210) note that "groups "commuted" from their homes to the field of battle." Units ranged in sizes of 12-20, typically organized around extended families from individual villages.

[13]Arqulla and Karasik (1999) identify the Chechen organization of political violence as an instance of "netwar" defined as "an emerging mode of conflict (and crime) at societal levels, short of traditional military warfare, in which the protagonists use network forms of organization" rather than military hierarchies (Arquilla and Ronfeldt 2001, 6).

Sergey Kulikov, the commander of the Russian forces in Chechnya following the capture of Grozny identifies the following as key factors in the success of Chechen resistance: "close ties with the local populace, actions by small detachments and teams, knowledge of and skillful use of terrain" (2003, 22). The local populace provided the support network necessary for the provision of food, clothing, shelter, medicine, and - if necessary - reservists to replenish the ranks in case of personnel loss. Perhaps most significantly for the coordination of political violence, the support network was also effective as an information network whereby communication among lateral units or between the semi-autonomous resistance network and the structured National Guard was facilitated without actual contact among them. The fluidity of participation in the ranks of Chechen groups was not lost on the Russian military leadership; Kulikov observes that groups would come together, disband, and change roles rapidly and with little regularity. The one constant aspect of this recurring recruitment process was that most fighters (especially volunteers) would remain regionally-based and "fight only in areas from which they [were] drawn."

However, in addition to providing a pool of potential recruits, the *teip* also served the significant function of providing information about those recruits. In this way, the *teip* structure (and all its subdivisions) served to minimize informational costs for the rebel group in terms of fitness of each potential recruit. In the words of one Chechen leader,

(quoted in Lieven (1998, 345)) "what matters is that someone has to be recommended to us by people we know and respect. They may be our relatives, or they may be connected to us in some other way. We have our traditions and they are very strong." Arquilla and Karasik (1999, 210) report that "commuting [as a squad from their homes to the battlefield] also ensured that all those whom a fighter knew would be kept well aware of his conduct on the battlefield - a significant impetus to acts of bravery." Conversely, signs of cowardice in combat would lead to loss of reputation within the *gar*, and by extension, in the *teip* as a whole.

While the above should illustrate the significance of Chechnya's social structure in understanding the recruitment patterns employed at the beginning of the conflict, one must not overstate that argument and in so doing neglect the impact of the hierarchical structure of the resistance at its upper strata. That the Chechen war effort was organized in the fashion of a professional army at its upper echelons should be no surprise. The leaders (as well as many among the standing army regulars) had all served at high ranking positions in the Soviet Army. Dzokhar Dudayev had reached the rank of Major General in the Soviet Air Force and at the pinnacle of his career had been the commander of the nuclear air force base in Tartu, Estonia. Aslan Maskhadov, his second-in-command and eventual replacement as president of the breakaway state, reached the rank of Colonel in charge of Soviet artillery in Vilnius, Lithuania

before retiring in 1992.[14] Both put their skills to great use as leaders of the resistance. Kulikov (2003, 21) notes that the Russians were surprised to find in 1994 "Chechnya's well-organized, standing armed forces equipped with weapons and hardware from virtually all branches of arms." These arms were acquired either by ransacking the stockpiles of the former Soviet warehouses in the area[15], by ambushes and raids on Russian troops, by bartering with Russian troops in exchange for cigarettes, drugs and alcohol, or by importing them from various countries (predominantly Islamic) partial to the Chechen cause. Further than the technical know-how and availability of weapons, the Chechen resistance also adhered to the structure of military units. Each contingent was composed of: a field commander and staff deputies who usually had served as officers in the Soviet Army in various capacities, a team whose sole purpose was to protect the field commander, a reconnaissance team (usually augmented through the use of local civilians as scouts to provide information on Russian troop movements), signalmen, snipers, riflemen and special forces (Kulikov 2003, 21). These units (unlike the regionally-based guerrilla groups) were deployed at all times. Rather than commute from their homes to the battlefield (a tactic which requires little

[14]The fact that both Chechen leaders had been posted in the Baltic states just as those states were calling for independence from the Soviet Union is not of merely circumstantial interest; both were greatly influenced by the events that they witnessed firsthand and, upon returning to their native land, already had an example to follow.

[15]At one time, Chechnya had been proposed as the site for nuclear missile storage. During the conflict, Dudayev – at numerous times – threatened with the use of nuclear weapons on Russian citizens. Whether the threat was credible was never ascertained.

prior organization) they would retreat to the mountains to regroup and then attack down into the plains, a technique that Chechens had used against Russian incursions for three centuries.

Thus, even though an assessment of organization along *teip* lines is possible (since kinship ties would tend to coincide with *teip* ties), it is somewhat misleading to consider the *teip* as a unit of analysis at least in terms of the construction of individual military units. If that were the case, we would expect to find units much larger than those that were active in the First War. Moreover, the use of terrain in operational tactics and the networking effect of diffuse, localized organization with a high degree of familiarity within and among units were equally important factors.

3.4.3 Failure in post-conflict reconstruction

The interwar period between 1996 and 1999 can only be characterized as a massive failure for Chechnya. The toll of the First War was staggering: the estimated loss of human life was 36,000 civilians, 4,000 Chechen combatants and 7.500 Russian troops (Lanskoy 2003, 186). Not even a semblance of public administration and provision of services existed. Faced with this predicament, Maskhadov faced an even more pressing problem; groups of fighters that had coalesced around specific leaders had effectively become private armies. Their allegiance was to their leader and not to their state.

Blandy (2003, 430) identifies the following factions in the fragmented political environment that developed in Chechnya in the inter-war period: support for the President Maskhadov, Shamil Basayev and his progressing alignment with the external Wahhabi elements, and several other smaller factions centered around a person that commanded small bands of loyalists such as Udugov, Yandarbiyev and (eventual President of the pro-Russian form of the Chechen Republic) Kadyrov. Lanskoy combines the element of criminality with the issue of the allegiances of different armed groups. For example, she claims that Arbi Baraev's Islamic Special Forces Division (IPON) was "responsible for most of the hostage trade and the murders of foreign aid workers". This example also highlights the interconnections in this chaotic, fragmented space, as Baraev was also connected to the Wahhabi faction. In other words, there was no way to characterize these organizations through neat and distinct categories, neither in terms of their objectives nor in terms of their alliances. On the other hand, it was clear that by 1999, the unifying elements that had facilitated the organization of political violence in Chechnya into a cohesive - if diffuse - entity had evaporated.

Tishkov (2001, 13) identifies the legacy of the first war and the primary failure of post-conflict reconstruction in Chechnya as "a problem of conflict generating doctrinal legacies and of fighting arguments in favor of ongoing violence." Thus, for some political actors facing the prospect of long-term peace was less favorable to the continuation of hostilities.

These conditions allowed for the ascendancy of forces that changed the perspective of the conflict for the participants as well as for external observers. At the same time, the dynamics that governed the organization of political violence and where to shape the form that the conflict would take in the years to come were also fundamentally transformed.

3.4.4 The rise of radical Islam and Wahhabism

The influence of Wahhabism in Chechnya (and the Caucasus region more broadly (Gammer 2005; Walker 2005) and the resulting radicalization of the conflict have received ample attention in the literature. This development has had a profound effect on changing perceptions of the conflict by external observers, especially in the West (Derluguian 1999; Lieven 1999). During the First War, global public opinion had been largely on the side of the Chechen plight; even Russian commentators on the War were critical of the tactics employed by the Russian forces and the resulting humanitarian disaster in the region (Politkovskaya 1999; 2003). Yet as the tactics employed by Chechen armed groups resorted to tactics of terrorism, the tide of public opinion turned (de Waal, 2003). This allowed the Russian political leadership to place Chechnya within the framework of the War on Terror (Williams 2004). Ultimately, the trajectory that led to this transformation of the conflict can be traced back to the Wahhabi factor.

Derluguian (1999), in his seminal account of the rise of Islamism in Chechnya, pinpoints 1995 as the year that served as the turning point of the conflict. In the beginning, a heightened Islamic awareness among Chechens served the purposes of Chechen leaders. It further differentiated between Chechens and Russians, even if only in symbolic significance since religion had almost nothing to do with the conflict. Once the wheels of Islamization were set in motion, it proved impossible for Dudayev and later Maskhadov to dampen the gathering momentum. During the inter-war period, the continued appeal of the move towards Islamization began to backfire; Maskhadov found himself unable to stop the move towards *Sharia* law and was forced the accommodate the extremist elements within his administration. Ultimately, this development led to a growing rift within Chechnya between the traditional Sufi order and the emergent Wahhabi influence (Derluguian 2003, 5). The radicalization process was starting to become a self-fulfilling prophecy that silenced moderate voices in Chechnya. However, it is also important to note that the Islamic dimension did not suddenly come to the forefront in 1999 but had been growing in significance over time. Wilhelmsen (2005, 37) notes that the process of radicalization for warlords such as Basayev, Raduyev, Udugov, Yandarbiyev, and Baraev began well before the Second War.

Walker (2005) breaks down the process of radicalization into distinct changes and corresponding patterns of pronouncements by leaders as

well as recruitment patterns. Prior and leading up to the First War the conflict against the Russian state was expressed strictly in terms of competing nationalisms; he notes that this was "little different from ethno-national mobilization in other parts of the Soviet Union at the time." (2005, 257) Militants who primarily relied on religious pronouncements were largely marginalized and Islam was considered but one part of Chechen identity rather than a driving force for the ensuing conflict. Over the course of the First War, however, Islamism became an increasingly salient factor more commonly used by some militant leaders. By the end of the First War, Walker argues that Chechnya had undergone a change which he calls Islamo-nationalism, a potent blend of religion and nationalism that is evident in the changing pronouncements and behavior of virtually all Chechen leaders, including the new President and hero of the First War Aslan Maskhadov. A simultaneously developing trend was the rise of a different philosophy which Walker terms Islamo-internationalism, whose proponents characterize as the struggle against Russia not as a contest between competing ethnicities but as "a defense of Islam and the liberation of a Muslim land from foreign occupation." Thus, the struggle is reinterpreted as another part in a composite struggle for the defense of all Muslims at the global or at least the regional (see Williams 2003) level .

All these components - Islamism as a growing force, the radicalization of Chechen leaders, and the placement of the Chechen

conflict in a global *jihadist* framework - created the conditions for the rising influence of Wahhabis in the conflict. Wahhabism was of marginal influence in Chechnya at the beginning of the conflict. According to Lanskoy (2002, 168) the label 'Wahhabite' in Chechnya had little to do with religious or social dissent, but instead connoted criminality; it served more as a description of behavior and perception rather than a description of religious sect. In the resource-starved Chechnya of 1996, Wahhabis with external funding and manpower were a very attractive ally for the Chechen warlords. Moreover, an alliance with Wahhabis meant an indirect alliance with their connections in the Islamic world at large; thus, an Islamic Chechen state would lead to long-term relationships with a system of which the traditionally isolated Chechnya had not been a part.

3.4.5 Organization of political violence in the Second War

A cursory analysis of the organization of political violence in the Second War seems to suggest a totally different scenario from the First War: the stated objectives were different, and there were changes in both overall strategy and specific tactics. Yet, the trajectory of the Second War can be viewed as an extension of the First War and the resulting inter-war period both in general terms and with respect to the specific issues of recruitment, the organization, and the conduct of political violence.

The goals of warfare in the Second War shifted from an emphasis on national identity, protection of the homeland, and resistance to the

Russian invasion to an emphasis on religious identity, the establishment of an Islamic state of the Caucasus, and taking the fight to Russian soil. Unlike the First War, these objectives were not universally shared by all Chechens. Thus, the basis of eligibility for recruitment changed from necessary applicability to personal ideological beliefs. This in itself seems to change the parameters of the collective action problem, while reducing the utility of the social network as an enforcement mechanism. But the prior occurrence of conflict effectively obviates the need for mechanisms that reveal information about potential participants since the majority of those who would contribute in the immediate future had already done so in the recent past. At the same time, the involvement of external actors who self-selected themselves into the conflict, and the cause for global *jihad* provided both manpower and resources in ways that helped alleviate all the associated problems with recruiting active participants.

Furthermore, the characterization of a continual conflict rather than two distinct ones can be seen in simpler terms in the objectives of the primary actors. For many of those who rose to prominence in the organization of political violence in the Second War, there had been no real end to the war since the objectives of the First War were never met to begin with. As Williams (2003, 15) observes, undertones of *jihad* were evident from the beginning of the First War, even though the ethnonationalist dimension came to define the conflict both in the eyes of the participants and external observers. Tanrisever (2000,84) adds

that “the war created generations of fighters and total unemployment that nourished instability”. Thus, the availability of engaged fighters with no alternative incentives to demobilize sustained an existing level of latent participation which was triggered into action with minimal requirements for organization.

The infamous Khattab arrived in Chechnya and joined Basayev’s forces in 1995. By 1996, the *mujaheddin* had begun training Chechen units (Bodansky 2007, 152; Murphy 2004, 39). Foreign *mujaheddin* were arriving from other areas where they fought for global *jihad*: Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Sudan, Bosnia-Herzegovina. Along with them came resources that were growing increasingly scarce; after all, the First War was conducted mainly with weaponry of the Soviet legacy. Hughes (2007, 98) identifies a variety of factors that led to increasing radicalization in the inter-war period: the traumatizing experience of the war, a general turn towards religiosity (but not necessarily radicalism) throughout the Caucasus in the post-Soviet era, and the inability of the Chechen elite - most prominently Maskhadov - to establish and then sustain robust political institutions. Ultimately, however, the Wahhabi factor was the most significant one in radicalizing elements of the Chechen forces that were unsatisfied with the outcome of the conflict. Over time, the local conflict was subsumed in a regional interpretation of an Islamic struggle against the Russians, which in turn was depicted as part of a global *jihad*.

The current situation that has taken characteristics of civil war between pro-Russian factions such as the supporters of the Kadyrov regime and Umarov's self-proclaimed Caucasus Emirate that is supported by the Arab *mujaheddin* can be seen as a direct outgrowth of these developments with the consequence of an ongoing conflict with little likelihood of resolving the initial issue of Chechen independence and self-determination.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter applies a theoretical framework of recruitment by organizations of political violence. The framework focuses on the role of social networks and social norms as an alternative to the provision of selective benefits in resolving collective action problems. The First and Second Russo-Chechen Wars serve as an illustrative case study of the theoretical mechanisms underlying the framework especially in the area of the usage of social norms. At the same time, the application frames the evolution of the organization of political violence from the First to the Second War. Two areas of further research suggest themselves. The first is an in-depth analysis of the relationship between the organization and the conduct of political violence that would provide a better understanding of the dynamics of the conflict. The second is a strategic analysis of the organization and conduct of political violence on both sides that extends

beyond recruitment as a dependent variable towards a deterministic model of political violence.

Chapter 4

Case Study: Sierra Leone

4.1 Introduction

The civil war in Sierra Leone has gathered considerable attention since its start in the early 1990s for a variety of reasons. It is now de rigeur to begin an analysis of the conflict with a discussion of the effect that Robert D. Kaplan's (1994) thesis of a dystopian post-Cold War scenario had on perceptions of the conflict, especially in the West. Amidst a multitude of theses (Fukuyama 1992; Huntington 1992; 1996; Mearsheimer 1990; Mueller 1989) put forward at the end of the Cold War about the prospects for peace in an uncertain international system, Kaplan's presented the bleakest scenario. Sierra Leone was set as the exemplar of Kaplan's cautionary discourse of the future potential for societal breakdown that, reportedly, had a profound effect among Washington policymakers at the time. In hindsight, was Kaplan right? Can the Sierra Leonean civil war be

characterized as a case of the confluence of tyranny, thuggery, tribalism, and disease? Some aspects of his neo-Malthusian tinged argument are definitely valid; both tyranny and thuggery were significant factors, not only in Sierra Leone but also in other regional conflicts[1]. Yet such a static interpretation of the conflict fails to account for the dynamic complexities that are examined below.

Other accounts of the causes of war in the case of Sierra Leone focus on alternative explanations. One common explanation is the concept of state collapse (Allen 1999; Baker 1999; Doornbos 2002; Reno 1999). Reno's framework of warlordism filling the vacuum of failed state institutions has been particularly influential[2,3]. Another is the war in Sierra Leone as a spillover from the war in neighboring (and meddling) Liberia (Gershoni 1997). Yet, by far and away, the most common interpretation of the conflict has centered on the role of lootable, natural resources as a cause of war; the literature in this area has been voluminous (see, inter alia, Gilmore 2005; Grant 2005; Le Billon 2001; Ross 2004a; 2004b; Snyder 2004; Snyder and Bhavnani 2005; Tamm 2002) .

The organization of political violence - and, more specifically, recruitment - have not received nearly as close attention in the literature. Perhaps expectedly, the characteristic of the conflict that has received the

[1]For an assessment of the causes of the conflict in Sierra Leone that uses Kaplan's argument as a starting point, see Riley and Sesay (1995).

[2]Reno (1999) is cited by just about every account of the conflict; the other framework to enjoy this distinction is that of Richards (1996).

[3]For an account that moves away from the 'state collapse' model, see Raeymaekers (2005).

most attention in this respect has been the use of children as combatants (Abdullah and Rashid 2004; Ashby 2002; Beah 2007[4]; Zack-Williams 2001). Due to the obvious ethical repercussions of this phenomenon, much of this literature has focused on human rights' violations (Amnesty International 2000a; 2000b; Human Rights Watch 2005; International Labour Office 2003; Smith, Gambette and Longley 2004) and the process of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) as part of the post-conflict reconstruction of the Sierra Leonean society (Bretherton, Weston and Zbar 2003; Peters 2007; Sommers 2002; 2003). The issue of juvenile combatants is nonetheless relevant both to the organization and the conduct of the conflict. Not only were children recruited by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) but also by the Sierra Leonean Army (SLA), the Civil Defense Forces (CDF), and the West Side Boys (WSB).

There are some accounts of the social dynamic that led to the formation of the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone but there has been considerable disagreement among them. The most prominent debate within the literature revolves around Paul Richards' (1996) *Fighting for the rain forest: War, resources and youth in Sierra Leone*[5]. The book was the first serious treatment of the conflict starting with the inception of the RUF. Part of the rationale for the book was the attempt to respond to Kaplan's interpretation of the conflict; Richards argued

[4]Beah's is not an academic account of the conflict but a detailed first-person account of a child combatant; in this case, one that was recruited by the Sierra Leonean Army.

[5]For an account of the development of this scholarly debate, see the Preface to Gberie (2005).

that neither deforestation nor overpopulation could be considered as significant contributing factors. Quite to the contrary, Richards argued, the war could only be understood as an extension of the traditional relationship between the Sierra Leoneans and the rain forest. As such, behavior during the conflict could be characterized as fulfilling traditional 'performance' roles. While this ritualistic anthropological interpretation of the conflict had significant influence on Western scholarship on the conflict[6], it was heavily criticized by Sierra Leonean scholars. Several responses antithetical to Richards' thesis were put forward, all of which are reviewed in this chapter[7].

This chapter presents this debate in order to examine the organizing principles of the conflict of the RUF, the recruitment strategies that the organization used as well as its conduct during the conflict. At the same time, the RUF is juxtaposed to the CDF in order to highlight significant differences in patterns of recruitment, even in the face of apparent similarity. The analysis of the RUF serves as an example of a case study where the organization's deviation from the optimal strategy suggested by the framework constrained its future options. On the other hand, the

[6]Just about every article written on Sierra Leone cites Richards (1996); increasingly, citations of that work have been more critical as dissenting interpretations of the conflict have developed. For a period of time, however, many accounts relied on the book as the definitive explanation of the causes of the conflict; for examples, see Boas (2001; 2002) and Simons (1999).

[7]The debate among Sierra Leonean scholars that was sparked by Richards' book was carried out on the on-line Sierra Leonean listserv Leonenet (http://www.leonenet.net/). The listserv's archives are hosted by Texas A&M University (http://listserv.tamu.edu/archives/leonenet.html).

CDF which arose in opposition exhibited the very characteristics that are central to the framework that I present: usage of existing social networks and norms in optimizing recruitment.

4.2 Historical overview of the conflict

The civil war in Sierra Leone began when the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone passed the border from Liberia into Sierra Leone on March 23 of 1991. Two small forces, no more than 150 fighters in total, entered Sierra Leone at two different entry points: Bomaru in the Kailahun District of the Eastern Province, and over the Mano River Bridge in the Pujehun District of the Southern Province. Under the leadership of Foday Saybana Sankoh, the RUF quickly moved through border towns and surrounding villages. Within a few months they assumed control over much of southern and eastern Sierra Leone along the border with Liberia, including the diamond mining region of the Kono District. Initially composed of Sierra Leonean dissidents, some members of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), and Burkinabe mercenaries, the group established control through a series of attacks over the porous border between the two war-torn states. NPFL members were identifiable to Sierra Leoneans through their foreign accent and use of Liberian dialects. The RUF grew in size exponentially as recruitment - increasingly forcible - and training

of fighters (including children) started immediately in camps that were hastily established in Kailahun.

Throughout 1991, the RUF exhibited the ruthless tactics that would draw so much international attention in the years to come: the abduction of civilians, forced labor, sexual violence, burning of residences or even whole villages, and systematic targeting of authority of any kind including state officials and traditional leaders such as tribal elders. The RUF's incursions had a profound effect on regime change in Sierra Leone. The All People's Congress (APC) had been in power since the late 1960s in Sierra Leone under the leadership of Siaka Stevens. With Stevens' hand-picked successor Joseph Momoh in power, the APC appeared increasingly unable to mount a counter-insurgency campaign and stifle the rebel movement. Mired in corruption and possessing an inefficient and ill-equipped standing army of about 3,000 soldiers[8], the APC regime appeared to languish in popular support, especially among the population of Mende[9] ethnicity that was primarily concentrated in the areas most affected by the conflict. In April 1992, this provided the impetus for a coup led by a group of disgruntled army officers known as the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) under the - allegedly reluctant, see Hirsch (2001, 35) - leadership of 25-year old Captain Valentine Strasser. This development was deemed positive by many Sierra Leoneans; the

[8]This figure includes reservists as reported in Keen (2005, 83).

[9]The Mende and the Temne are the largest ethno-linguistic subdivisions of Sierra Leone at about one-third of the population each. They are respectively geographically concentrated in the South and North of Sierra Leone.

NPRC presented the possibility of a fresh start with a clean slate and the hope of a move away from corruption and patrimonialism.

As a response to the momentum gained by the RUF, and as a strategy aimed at minimizing the RUF's pool of potential recruits, the NPRC launched a sweeping recruitment initiative employing techniques similar to those used by the RUF, mainly targeting young males. With the tremendous upswell in army ranks - up to 12,000 as reported by Richards (1996) - a remarkable phenomenon developed: young soldiers who acted as rebels by night, engaging in looting and terror tactics. They became known as 'sobels'. The phenomenon had a profound effect on public opinion among Sierra Leoneans with the increasing perception that the majority of violent behavior was being perpetrated by members of the army. Subsequently, the perception of the NPRC as a clean break from past corrupt practices started to diminish (Keen 1995).

At the same time, a civil militia group comprised of local hunters called the Donsos joined the SLA in the Kono District, fighting side by side with forces of the United Liberian Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO), opponents of the NPFL in Liberia. The Donsos, together with other local hunting societies throughout Sierra Leone such as the Tamaboros and the Kamajors, would later join forces and form the Civil Defence Forces, an increasingly important organization in the changing dynamics of the conflict. Over time and as the behavior of 'sobels' (little differentiable from that of the rebels) caused increasing tension between

the SLA and civil militia groups, civilian mistrust of the SLA became widespread.

The RUF, which had become less visible over the course of the past year renewed its campaign around the Christmas period of 1994. A series of separate attacks and hostage-taking incidents at different parts of the country, beginning in December of 1994 and continuing into early 1995, brought the RUF back to prominence. Throughout March, April and May of that year, RUF forces concentrated their efforts on consolidating control over many towns in the western, diamond-rich area of the Kono District.

As the conflict between the RUF and the NPRC regime intensified, the latter recruited Nigerian conscripts and Nepalese Gurkha mercenaries as complements to the national armed forces. This knee-jerk reaction was largely unsuccessful as the Gurkhas suffered severe losses and were summarily withdrawn following the death of their leader US Colonel Robert Mackenzie in February of 1995. The reliance of the NPRC on external actors in opposition to the RUF did not end there, as the Gurkhas were soon replaced by a South African security firm known as Executive Outcomes (EO)[10] in May of 1995. This was not the start of Executive Outcomes' involvement in the conflict as NPRC soldiers had been sent to South Africa to train with the organization as early as December 1993 (Keen 2005, 100). The outcome was immediate: the Special Task Force

[10]For the use of mercenaries in Sierra Leone in general, see Francis (1999). For an account of the involvement of Executive Outcomes in African conflicts including but not limited to Sierra Leone, see Harding (1997) and Howe (1998).

(STF), comprised of Executive Outcomes, SLA and ULIMO members was successful in contesting control of territory and wresting large diamond mining areas from the hands of the RUF.

On January 16 of 1996 Strasser was replaced by Brigadier General Julius Maada Bio in a bloodless internal coup. Strasser was handcuffed and flown to Conakry, the capital of neighboring Guinea. Bio's reign was short-lived as the presidential and legislative elections in late February went ahead as planned despite allegations and some evidence of disruptive attempts by Bio's regime (Hirsch 2001; Keen 2005). On March 17 of 1996, after a required run-off election in which he defeated the leader of the United National People's Party (UNPP) John Karefa Smart, Ahmed Tejan Kabbah of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) was elected president of Sierra Leone.

Kabbah's most pressing priority upon assumption of the presidency was to put an end to the conflict as soon as possible. Constant negotiations between the government and the RUF started taking place in April and eventually came to fruition in November of 1996; undoubtedly, RUF's mounting losses to both Executive Outcomes and the Kamajors hastened the hand of the rebels. Yet the Abidjan Peace Agreement, signed on November 30 and scheduled to be formally implemented on December 19 with the launch of the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace (a joint governmental-RUF commission), broke down just as soon as the proverbial ink dried. Amidst allegations of improprieties on both

sides, some alleged and some confirmed, communication between the government and the rebels broke down by January 1997.

In the aftermath of the failure of the peace process, events unfolded in rapid succession in Sierra Leone. Sankoh was arrested in early March of 1997 during a trip to Nigeria and would eventually be held in custody there until July of 1998 when he would be flown back to Freetown to stand trial. Soon after his capture, a cadre of RUF elites unsuccessfully attempted to oust him in an internal coup. A group of junior army officers calling themselves the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) seized the opportunity created by the instability within the RUF and the breakdown of the peace process and with swift military action on May 25 of 1998 took control of Freetown in that single day. The AFRC freed all political prisoners including their leader, Major Johnny Paul Koroma, who had been imprisoned since an earlier coup attempt in September 1996[11].

In an astonishing move, the AFRC - erstwhile combatants against the RUF as army officers under the previous regime - immediately extended an olive branch to their former enemies. Collaboration between the two organizations, including direct communication between Sankoh and Koroma began as soon as the AFRC assumed the reins in Freetown. The task of opposition fell to civil defense groups and international forces. International support came in the form of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) established by the

[11] Koroma claimed that he "knew nothing about" the coup for which he was imprisoned as reported in Keen (2005, 208) as part of the author's interview of Koroma.

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and mainly consisted of Nigerian forces. Ultimately, it was these forces that managed - after brutal urban warfare - to oust the AFRC/RUF coalition from Freetown in mid-February of 1998. On March 10, President Kabbah returned to the capital in an atmosphere of hope that the expulsion of the junta regime would signify the end of the conflict. Far from it, by the end of the year the RUF was poised for renewed attacks on Freetown. In early January 1999, they did just that in a devastating attack on the city, attacking civilians indiscriminately and freeing imprisoned rebels. Ultimately, though, they were driven back by ECOMOG forces after a three day (January 6-9) battle. However, Olonikasin (2004, 230) reports that the cost of repelling the rebel attack "was colossal; 5,000 civilians were killed and millions of property damaged."

After strong international pressure, discussions between the RUF and the Kabbah administration resulted in a ceasefire on May 24 of 1999. The dialogue culminated in the Lome Peace Agreement signed on July 7, 1999 which replicated much of the earlier Abidjan Agreement. Internal fragmentation within the RUF had been growing since the retreat from Freetown. With Sankoh publicly advocating the end of hostilities while the RUF pushed on, it was clear by the end of the year that the provisions of the agreement would be difficult to enforce.

On October 22 of 1999, the United Nations Security Council authorized the deployment of a 6,000-strong peacekeeping mission to

Sierra Leone, in order to assist with the implementation of the Lomé Peace Agreement. The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was deployed in late 1999. By January of 2000, 4,500 UNAMSIL troops were present in Sierra Leone with the provision to expand over time as they took on the responsibilities of ECOMOG. The DDR program was launched at the same time, even as hostilities between the RUF and the CDF resumed.

ECOMOG's withdrawal in May of 2000 opened the window of opportunity for RUF forces to launch attacks against UNAMSIL leading to the hostage-taking of around 500 UN peacekeepers. The UK (a significant source of international influence throughout the conflict) sent a contingent to Freetown with the aim of providing security for the area around the capital but most importantly to train government forces. When eleven of these UK troops were taken hostage by the West Side Boys[12], the UK response (called Operation Barras[13]) was decisive. The hostages were rescued in September of 2000, but more importantly rebel presence in the capital was effectively eliminated as the West Side Boys were decimated by the British forces.

As the remnants of the RUF hierarchy disintegrated, hostilities became increasingly sporadic and uncoordinated and in August of 2000, RUF forces surrendered to UN peacekeepers in Kabala. Renegotiation of a ceasefire took place in Abuja, Nigeria; the agreement was signed on

[12]The West Side Boys were a particularly violent splinter group of the AFRC/RUF coalition concentrated in the poor Eastern districts of Freetown.

[13]For an analysis of Operation Barras, see Fowler (2005).

November 10 of 2000 and renewed on May 4 of 2001. On January 18 of 2002, during a symbolic ceremony President Kabbah declared the official end of the disarmament period and the war. Later that year, Kabbah was elected to his second - and final as constitutionally mandated - term as President. In 2007, the SLPP lost the election to the APC whose leader Ernest Bai Koroma ascended to the presidency.

At the same time, the Special Court for Sierra Leone was established in order to bring to justice those responsible for war crimes and general violations of international humanitarian law during the conflict. The Court was the result of a request by President Kabbah to the United Nations for assistance. Since 2003, the Court has indicted thirteen participants to the conflict. Five leaders of the RUF were put on trial: Foday Sankoh and Sam Bockarie both died in custody while awaiting trial; Issa Sesay, Morris Kallon, and Augustine Gbao received sentences of 52, 40, and 25 years in prison, respectively. Four leaders of the AFRC were indicted; three of them, Alex Tamba Brima, Brima Bazzy Kamara, and Santigie Borbor Kanu were convicted, the first two to 50 years in prison, the latter to 45. The AFRC leader Johnny Paul Koroma fled Sierra Leone in December of 1993 and his whereabouts were never established again; he is officially considered to have been killed, a claim that has never been fully confirmed.

The most controversial cases for the Special Court have been the ones that involved leaders of the CDF. Samuel Hinga Norman, former

Minister of the Interior and overall leader of the CDF, as well as Allieu Kondewa and Moinina Fofana, military commanders of the Kamajors, were indicted for war crimes and crimes against humanity. Since the CDF's role was generally seen as positive in the conflict and on the side of forces that aimed to restore democratic government in Freetown, the indictments were regarded differently than those of the rebel and junta leaders. Yet the conduct of the CDF during the conflict was in many ways similar to that of the RUF. Norman died under custody, while Kondewa received a sentence of 20 years and Fofana a sentence of 15.

Charles Taylor, the former President of Liberia and leader of the NPFL who was so instrumental to the RUF's rise at the beginning, was the sole non-Sierra Leonean indicted for his role in the conflict. His trial started on June 4 of 2007, and it is currently still ongoing.

4.3 The Organization of political violence in the Sierra Leonean civil war

4.3.1 Establishment of the RUF

How did an organization with the stated aim of fighting state corruption come to terrorize the very people on whose behalf it purported to operate? In other words, how did it come to replicate the very behavior to which it aimed to put an end? To answer these questions, it is necessary to

examine the composition of the RUF at its inception: Which principles helped develop the organizational basis of the RUF? How did its leadership come together and how did those leaders aim to pursue their goals for political change in Sierra Leone? At the same time, it is important to consider the degree to which the events that ensued were truly in pursuit of some specific ideological pronouncements or simply an exercise in resource appropriation. Ultimately, it is necessary to consider the collective ideology espoused by those who acted at the group's inception as well as their personal motivations and the way the combination of the two shaped the behavior exhibited by the RUF throughout the conflict. More importantly, at least for the purposes of this study, the following question must be answered: Why would an organization with the stated aim of liberating a population which represented its pool of potential participants systematically attack them throughout the conflict? Such behavior is undoubtedly counterproductive; it serves to minimize rather than maximize recruitment. Thus, in addition to the organizing principles that came to define the core leadership of the RUF, it is important to examine the way in which it came to rely on coercive recruiting mechanisms.

As already stated, the first wave of scholarly attention to the Sierra Leonean civil war produced a vigorous debate between Paul Richards, the scholar whose 1996 account of the conflict first set the parameters for analyzing the conflict, and a group of Sierra Leonean scholars who

interpreted Richards' framework as misguided and misapplied to the case of Sierra Leone. While that debate was intended to explain the causes of the conflict, it certainly bears interest in an analysis of the foundations of the RUF, the composition of its leadership at the initial stage, and the way in which it developed during the course of the conflict. By extension, that analysis can serve to explain the conduct of the RUF and its interactions with the ever-changing political administration of Sierra Leone (in an iteration of which the RUF actively participated), as well as the CDF that emerged in direct opposition to the RUF.

In the final analysis, the two sides of the debate agree on the ideological foundations of the movement: an amalgamation of Socialism and Pan-Africanism combined with the ideas of Muammar Qaddafi in the *Green Book* and Kim il-Sung's *Juche Idea*[14]. Where the two sides disagree is on the role of the eventual RUF leaders in this intellectual movement that was taking place in Sierra Leone in the 1970s[15]. Richards explains the RUF's core as a social movement led by an elite cadre of excluded intellectuals who coalesced around a set of ideological principles and over a period of time developed into a cohesive network; in other words, precisely the student radicals that Rashid describes. As a result, he

[14]It is interesting to note that these clusters of ideas are essentially contradictory. Socialism and Pan-Africanism are both expansionist political philosophies with an emphasis on international and regional unification, respectively. On the other hand, both Qaddafi's and Kim il-sung's philosophies are essentially isolationist with an emphasis on national self-sufficiency, even though both philosophies were intended for application beyond Libya and North Korea.

[15]Specifically, among the students of the country's leading academic institution Fourah Bay College, according to Rashid (2004, 69)

interprets the Sierra Leonean war as the culminating crisis after prolonged periods of decline of the existing patrimonial state[16]. Conversely, Abdullah and Muana (1998) identify the RUF's origins in the *lumpenproletariat* underclass of rebellious youth that proliferated in Freetown in the 1970s and that social group's loose association with radical students on the basis of the common experience of repression under the Siaka Stevens regime. Yet, where Richards sees a well-rounded and articulated ideological basis, others see a hodge-podge of revolutionary pronouncements with the goal of providing enough of a focal point for the organization of these underclass elements; in other words, the eventual leaders of the RUF were among those who co-opted these radical philosophies but they were never the intellectual authors of the movement.

Analyses of this formative social structure of the RUF (Abdullah 2004; Abdullah and Muana 1998; Bangura 2004; Gberie 2005; Rashid 2004) see the evolution of the relationship between student radicalism and the lumpen under-class as pivotal to the inception of the organization and informative as to the behavior that it later exhibited. Abdullah (1998, 207) defines lumpens as "the largely unemployed and unemployable youths, mostly male, who live by their wits or who have one foot in what is generally referred to as the informal or underground economy. They are

[16]Patrimonialism is used in the Weberian sense of a system of government that rules by using a patron-client relationship in its use of administrative and military resources. It is, by definition, an exclusionary system where there is little division between the public and private spheres, and where opportunities for liberalization of political institutions are actively limited by the patron.

prone to criminal behavior, petty theft, drugs, drunkenness, and gross indiscipline[17]." Kandeh (1999, 356) describes them as "the product of both elite pillage and subaltern banditry." In Sierra Leone, they are generally referred to as 'rarray boys'. This social group has a long history of association with the conduct of political violence, but not its organization and leadership. In the late 1960s, Siaka Stevens and the APC had used them as political thugs for hire; in many cases, ironically, to quell student protest.

Their ties to student radicalism as their environment and practices became more common in a development of quasi-gentrification in the 1970s. Rarray boys congregated in *potes*[18] where, initially, illegal activities were common-place and connected to the underworld of organized crime. As the *pote* became increasingly mainstream to the Freetown middle-class, the environment was gradually transformed to an arena of intellectual exchange, especially in terms of sociopolitical ideas. Within that context, student radicals who possessed the knowledge to vocalize the grievances of marginalization became increasingly influential in an association characterized by an interesting commonality. Student radicals considered themselves at the margins of mainstream society but for reasons different than the traditional characterization

[17]The definition, as well as general usage in Sierra Leone, follows Karl Marx's introduction of the term *lumpenproletariat* to describe marginalized elements of the proletariat. It is interesting - and somewhat ironic - that Marx considered this class to be detrimental to the revolutionary potential of the proletariat, since they had no incentive to change the existing sociopolitical order.

[18]Establishments largely similar in nature to English pubs.

of *lumpenproletariat*; they were marginals because their education and aspirations for sociopolitical change had no avenue to effect that transformation in a political system ruled by authoritarian patrimonialism.

Their frustration was articulated through the aforementioned amalgamation of different political philosophies. As the two social groups increasingly interconnected and radicals assumed the role of ideological (if not necessarily organizational) leaders, there was a general alignment and pervasiveness of these ideas. Yet while there was widespread rhetoric of social transformation, there was little in the way of mobilization for the purposes of armed revolution; in fact, none of the original intellectual leaders of the movement were part of what eventually became the RUF. Fanthorpe (2001, 370) even suggests that many of the lumpens "became active in the RUF when it was still an underground movement and may have ousted an original leadership of student radicals."

The specific impetus for action that was missing from the Sierra Leonean social context was eventually provided in Libya. It was there that revolutionary sentiment was fomented and the inception of a revolutionary core began. Muammar Qaddafi's regime funded the training of revolutionary volunteers from all over Africa at his training camps in Benghazi. Alie Kabba, a student radical expelled from Fourah Bay College and studying in Ghana with Libyan funds, became the liaison charged with recruiting Sierra Leoneans (Abdullah 1998, 214). Among those who

answered the call in the late 1980s were Abu Kanu, Rashid Mansaray, and Foday Sankoh, the eventual triumvirate of the RUF. As the majority of the student radicals in Freetown turned against the idea of military action and declined the invitation, the resulting group was composed of mostly unemployed, relatively uneducated, young lumpens. Sankoh was a distinctive anomaly; much older than the rest and with little exposure to their ideological philosophy, his emphasis was on militancy alone[19]. As the attempt to organize came to naught amidst growing infighting within this nascent group, Sankoh returned to Sierra Leone where he grew closer to Kanu and Mansaray and embarked on attempts to recruit individuals to their fledgling cause.

The other pivotal external connection that facilitated the formation of the RUF was provided by Liberia. There is debate over whether Sankoh and Charles Taylor became personally acquainted during their time in Libya (Abdullah 1998, 220). What is certain though is that Taylor and other members of his NPFL networked with Sierra Leoneans in Libya and kept those lines of communication open later on between Freetown and Monrovia. By 1990, some of the Sierra Leonean group that had trained in Libya a few years earlier (including Kanu and Mansaray) were actively participating with the NPFL. The favor was repaid by Taylor when the first incursion of the RUF back into Sierra Leone took place.

[19]Gberie (2005) offers the best biographical account of Foday Sankoh, the RUF leader.

Initially the RUF was composed of: 1) those who had trained with the RUF leaders in Libya and followed them to Liberia; 2) Sierra Leonean expatriates recruited in Liberia; and 3) a contingent of Liberians "on loan" from the NPFL together with a small contingent of Burkinabe mercenaries. Thus, at this point, the organizing principle of the core did indeed constitute a collective goal, at least in terms of its expression to potential recruits: the overthrow of a decrepit and corrupt sociopolitical system that systematically appropriated the resources of its population. The message did in fact resonate with some who voluntarily joined the RUF; after all, there was little opposition to the sentiment itself among those Sierra Leoneans not favored by the clientilistic regime in Freetown.

But the RUF never moved beyond this generic stated objective; it never developed specific programs for a future Sierra Leone where the sociopolitical conditions would be different for individual citizens. The only document that the RUF ever produced was the propaganda booklet *Footpaths to democracy: towards a new Sierra Leone*; it started to circulate in 1995, four years after the incursion of the RUF over the Liberian border. According to Abdullah (1998, 223), the document was the first of a two-volume work; the second never came. When asked in a 2000 interview what policies the RUF would pursue if it came to power, Foday Sankoh's response was that they were still preparing them, almost a decade into the conflict! As is explained below, the RUF's approach to achieving its goals was never articulated to the population from which it could draw

support and participation. Instead, as the violence mounted and the RUF squandered the favorable popular opinion that it briefly enjoyed at the beginning of the conflict, it came to rely on forcible recruitment once the pool of volunteerism had dried up.

4.3.2 Establishment of the CDF

As the conflict progressed, the Sierra Leonean population came to increasingly regard the RUF as a threat, and the ever-changing governmental institutions as unable or unwilling to provide for their security or even complicit to the threat. In this vacuum, the need for security provision was to some degree fulfilled by the Civil Defense Forces. Hoffman characterizes the CDF as "the militarization of a social network" (2007, 639) and "a web of social relations" (2007, 640). Based on traditional hunting societies, the CDF provided an already existing organization which exhibited not only combat-readiness (due to the function of their traditional role) but also combat-worthiness. By the time the SLPP regime called upon the CDF - specifically, the Mende Kamajors - to serve as quasi-governmental forces[20], they had already "distinguished themselves in 1994 in a series of encounters around Bo [District] with elements of the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF)" (Zack-Williams 1997, 375).

[20]CDF groups were endorsed (sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly) by the government but they were never officially a subdivision of the Sierra Leonean Army. In fact, the relationship between the CDF and the SLA was overall quite strained. In cases where the phenomenon of 'sobels' was evident, CDF groups treated the SLA in the same way as the RUF.

Individual organizations within the CDF were ethnically based. While disproportionate attention has been given to the Mende Kamajors[21] since they were the largest organization, there were also CDF organizations of other ethnicities. There were organizations of Kuranko (the Tamaboros[22]), of Temne (the Gbethis and the Kapras) and of Kono (the Donsos) ethnicity. All of these were further subdivided into localized collectives. Each of these was composed of specialized hunters enlisted to fulfill their traditional role of protecting their villages. Since their locus of operation was both regional and ethnically-based, CDF forces did not tend to see other CDF groups as a threat. Largely as a result of this regional territorial distribution, "the CDF is the only armed group ever to have been popular among Sierra Leone's population" (Ducasse-Rogier 2004, 25).

There are, however, a number of criticisms leveled against the CDF; in some ways, the CDF and the RUF - in fact, every organization that engaged in political violence in Sierra Leone - appear very similar. Like the organization that they so brutally but effectively resisted, they also engaged in the illegal diamond trade, and they also committed human rights' violations. Ferme and Hoffman (2004, 73) argue that "once militias left their local functions of grassroots civil defense units and moved beyond the territories where they were recruited, they made

[21] This is the spelling of the word that is most widely used; it may be interchangeably spelled as Kamajohs or Kamajoisia.

[22] In fact, the Tamaboros were the first to organize as a militia during the conflict.

strategic decisions in combat based on a selective interpretation of humanitarian discourse and practices." Johnson (2008) attributes the atrocities committed by CDF forces to the lack of monitoring and oversight of local commanders by a central hierarchy. In other words, the attribute that allowed the CDF flexibility both in its recruitment and operations was also the reason for the inability to rein in excesses by localized groups; ultimately, there were no repercussions for conduct, at least at the time, for CDF leaders.

It is interesting to note that while the composition of the various CDF groupings introduced a - theretofore absent - ethnic component to the conflict, the salience of ethnic division was never a contributing factor to the conflict either in the conduct of different organizations or to its outcome. Another interesting development is that some Kamajors went on to fight in Liberia where they exhibited more brutality in attacks targeting civilians (Hoffman 2004).

Even as the brutality of CDF fighters came to resemble that of the rebels, their social origins greatly differed. Individual participants were recruited through the traditional subdivisions of the Sierra Leonean social network and the roles that they fulfilled were predicated on traditional social norms. Such traditional social norms guided specific patterns of behavior as expected from participants; for example, Hoffman (2007, 651; also see Leach 2000) illustrates the social norm of "standing for" others in the community. Ferme and Hoffman (2004, 74) illustrate that "the

'practices of the self' and ethical codes developed within the hunting militias" were rooted in longstanding tradition; as they claim they were "inherited from regional political and social history."

The Kamajor association with tradition blended the practicalities of organizing principles with the functions of hunting and medicine in mystical ways. Strict hierarchies and exclusionary initiation rituals created a heavily regimented structure that lent itself to militaristic organization. At the same time, however, attributes such as "'contractual' associations with bush spirits" (Leach 2000, 588), as well as beliefs about magical forces and a traditional discourse on the bond between rural communities and the rain forest, restricted the scope of potential recruitment to the initiated among the community (Muana 1997). It is interesting to note that in contrast to both the RUF and the SLA, CDF groups maintained their ranks over their active period in the conflict and exhibited fierce loyalty.

In addition to the normative aspect of tradition that served to constrain behavior, the functional aspect was equally, if not more significant. The overlapping roles of hunter and warrior over a long period of time created a class of individuals with a set of skills that were directly transferable to the battlefield. Proficiency with weaponry[23], marksmanship, stealth, and - most significantly - a familiarity of their rural surroundings meant that hunting militias could be transformed into

[23]Ferme and Hoffman (2004, 75) note that, despite the primacy of tradition in Kamajor organization, they were also associated with technology in weaponry. This attribute normally is omitted in accounts of the CDF that focus on the pre-modern archetypes and mystical characteristics of the hunting societies.

guerrilla units with little need for reorganization. Leach (2000, 590) reports that Kamajor groups recruited among the many *poro* (regionally-based fraternal organizations) which inducted "only local children whose moral characters were well known." These local organizations provided the intelligence, organization, and hierarchy necessary for the maintenance of the Kamajors' networked structure. Moreover, inclusion in the hunting organizations of local communities was performance-dependent, "requiring evidence of impressive killing, gained in hunting perhaps over a long period" (Leach 2000, 589). As the CDF came under increasing attack from both the RUF and the AFRC-led army, "the esoteric ritual aspects of induction into the CDF-Kamajor militias became more important (and the cost of initiation more expensive), and centrally controlled by a handful of initiators" (Ferme and Hoffman 2004, 77).

Another major advantage of the usage of the CDF for the Kabbah administration was in terms of cost cutting (Zack-Williams 1997). According to Riley (1997, 288) "the 110 mercenaries and 'advisers' provided by Executive Outcomes cost US$1.7m a month." The cost of security provision was one of the justifications given by Koroma, the leader of the AFRC, for the coup. Riley (1997, 290) states that Koroma's claims of the underfunding of the SLA compared to the private security companies and the CDF were grossly exaggerated. For example, Koroma claimed that there were 37,000 Kamajors on the government's payroll, while a United Nations study estimated their strength at 2,500 to 3,000.

However, the shifting patterns of participation in the CDF makes any attempt at determining a definitive size of the force very difficult; for example, Leach (2000, 588) estimates that, at times, the CDF totaled between 15,000-25,000.

4.3.3 Subgroups of organized violence

4.3.3.1 The 'Sobel' phenomenon

The development of so-called '*Sobels*' - a portmanteau of the phrase "*so*ldiers by day, re*bels* by night" - is a distinct phenomenon of the Sierra Leone civil war. Similarly to the RUF core, most 'sobels' were lumpen youths (Kandeh 1999). As the conflict progressed, the RUF swelled in numbers through forced recruitment, while the CDF militias were coming together both as defense forces and as substitutes for the SLA. In response, the SLA lowered its standards and increasingly recruited lumpen youths, throwing them into the heat of battle with little formal training. President Momoh admitted that "in the quest to increase numbers, training standards dropped and discipline may have subsided also, because not much time was given to screening entrants. The result is that a large number of undesirables, waifs, strays, lay-abouts and bandits may now be in the nation's military uniform" (*West Africa*, 28 October - 3 November, 1996, 1676).

As 'sobels' were generally indistinguishable from regular soldiers, the Sierra Leonean population increasingly came to fear everyone in

uniform, the very people that were charged with protecting them. In this context, it is easy to see why local CDF groups were more popular than the SLA. This also meant that it was becoming more difficult to conceptualize a viable end to the conflict. Since the SLA did not have total control of its forces, the usage of external security forces such as Executive Outcomes was justified as the only means of securing the country's precious resources (Harding 1997). This was of paramount importance to the government since the 'Sobelization' of the Army perpetuated itself through a process of recruitment for diamond mining purposes (Kandeh 1999, 364).

Since 'sobels' were not a distinct organization of political violence, it is not included here as an entity in opposition to the RUF and the CDF separate from the SLA. Nevertheless, understanding all the processes that developed during the conflict serves to explain observable patterns of behavior, especially when those patterns may seem irrational and perverse. Ultimately, the phenomenon is the outcome of a weak institutional hierarchy and of insufficient monitoring mechanisms. One of the main objectives of this study is the differentiation between states and non-state actors in the organization of political violence. Perhaps the defining attributes of difference is the oft-mentioned monopoly over the legitimate use of force, and the institutionalization of recruitment mechanisms in order to maintain that monopoly, as well as its legitimacy. The Sierra Leonean state clearly fell short on both of those counts.

4.3.3.2 The West Side Boys

While the splinter group known as the West Side Boys did not emerge through an autonomous process and were not as significant to the conflict as the major organizations of political violence, a brief discussion of its development can highlight some patterns that shed light onto the overall characterization of the conflict. The WSB resulted from a confluence of factors. The SLA's attempt to increase its size in response to the RUF's forcible recruitment led to both organizations being populated by lumpen youths. In the case of the SLA, many of them came to power with the AFRC in 1998. The AFRC's reign was short-lived, as its relationship with the RUF quickly disintegrated. Over the next year, the AFRC devolved into a multitude of smaller armed groups that roamed the streets of Freetown and the surrounding areas. None of them captured global imagination more than the WSB, partly due to the exposure that they received in Western media as a result of Operation Barras, and partly due to their colorful nature and their image that was based on American hip-hop music (Reno 2003, 60).

Utas and Jorgel (2008) analyze how the WSB functioned as a military/economic unit in the wartime economy of Sierra Leone. Looting and trading arms, medicine, drugs, diamonds, or any other contraband that came within their reach became the primary function of the WSB. The organization never made any political pronouncements nor did it develop a social agenda. If there was a purely predatory VPO in the Sierra

Leone civil war, this was it; the WSB was an ideal type resource extraction organization. Yet the WSB was not a band of rag-tag group of criminals, as they are often portrayed in the Western media. Their leaders were part of the same network of SLA officials that produced the AFRC. So their organizational skills and principles essentially mirrored those of the SLA. Their tactics and operations were characterized by formal military structure, and not by chaotic, purposeless violence.

4.4 Recruitment patterns

Since the end of the war various studies of active participation have been conducted that have yielded illuminating results, especially since they have made available individual accounts of combatants that detail their experiences during the war (Humphreys and Weinstein 2004; 2006; 2008; Maclure and Denov 2006; Mazurana and Carlson 2004; Peters and Richards 1998).

Humphreys and Weinstein (2004) conducted a detailed survey of ex-combatants of all primary organizations in the conflict: the RUF, the CDF, and the SLA. Their findings present some very interesting patterns of recruitment and confirm the analysis presented above. They find that the vast majority of combatants of both the RUF and the CDF were uneducated and poor. Their findings also support the stipulation that while there may have been a small class of intellectuals that formed the

core of the RUF at the beginning of the conflict, the average level of education of fighters declined continuously throughout the course of the conflict, proportionally to the decline in average age of participation as child combatants were increasingly recruited.

The RUF recruited the majority of its fighters in the first years of the conflict in two major "recruiting drives" in 1991-92 and 1996-98. Social networking did not play a significant role in the process, since participants were largely recruited by force. According to survey participants, 85% of them were recruited as RUF combatants by strangers. Furthermore, 87% of RUF combatants reported being forcibly abducted into the faction whereas only 9% suggested that they joined voluntarily in support of the group's political goals. The authors conclude that this pattern remains consistent throughout the conflict and that there is little evidence that different recruitment patterns were ever at work in the early stages of the conflict for the RUF.

RUF combatants claimed that they fought to express dissatisfaction, to root out corruption, and to bring down the existing regime. They were promised jobs, money, and women; during the war, they received women, drugs, and sometimes more valuable goods. If leaders of the factions did in fact make large fortunes from these industries, these profits do not help to explain the motivations of the vast majority of combatants. Throughout the conflict, the interests of most fighters, particularly those in the RUF, remained focused on basic needs (access to security, food, and education)

and not on the political agenda of the movement or on control of lucrative resources. Incentives also included access to drugs, and for some, license to engage in sexual exploitation and violence.

Conversely, the majority of CDF recruits joined in the late 1990s, as the militias formed as a counter-balancing force to the RUF. Each of the ethnically-based organizations that made up the CDF originated from tight networks of families, friends, and communities. It had much higher levels of voluntary recruitment: 77% of respondents were recruited by a friend, relative, or community leader and 15% joined of their own accord. According to Johnston (2008, 132) Mende youths were conscripted - essentially hand-picked - into bands by local elders. Moreover, new members of the CDF typically joined units in which they had family members, friends, or members of their communities. Interestingly, while there is a general consensus on the role that community ties played in recruitment by the CDF, Humphreys and Weinstein (2006, 443) do not find a "strong relationship between the extent of combatant-community ties and the patterns of abuse."

CDF fighters argued that they aimed to defend their communities from the violence brought to their regions by the war. Political motivations notwithstanding, there were strong material incentives as well. The CDF helped to meet the basic needs of the members and provided increased security for their families. In contrast to RUF combatants, 62% of CDF combatants reported joining because they supported the group's political

goals. Many participated because they were scared of what would happen if they did not join, or in order to exact revenge on the RUF. Interviews of ex-combatants conducted by Human Rights Watch (2005, 11) corroborate these results: "Nearly all of those who originally fought with the RUF had been abducted and pressed into military service. Almost all those in the CDF militia, said that they joined to protect their villages and communities from rebel attack."

Mazurana and Carlson (2004, 3) report that out of the approximately 45,000 combatants that were recruited by the RUF over the course of the conflict, roughly 22,5000 (50%) were child soldiers of which 7,500 (17%) were girls[24]. By contrast, they estimate that 17,216 (25%) of the total of 68,865 CDF combatants were child soldiers of which 1,722 (2.5%) were girls. The authors report that nearly all girl combatants surveyed stated "abduction" and "forced recruitment" as the recruiting mechanism by which they came to join either organization. They present the following data on the roles that girl combatants fulfilled: 72% acted as cooks; 68% as porters; 62% as assistants for the sick and wounded; 60% as "wives"; 44% as food producers; 40% as messengers among 17 rebel camps; 22% as spies; 18% percent as communications technicians; and 14% percent as workers in diamond mines. Clearly, girl combatants fulfilled multiple roles as part of either the RUF or the CDF. Moreover, 44% of all girl combatants received basic military and weapons training from their commanders and

[24]The authors report that the average age of girl combatants was twelve.

saw active duty as fighters. Amnesty International (1998, 29) reports that children as young as seven years old "were still seen carrying arms and guarding CDF checkpoints".

Maclure and Denov (2006) state that out of a sample of 36 boys that were recruited by the RUF between the ages of thirteen and sixteen, not even one was a voluntary participant. They report that their early days with the organization consisted of intense indoctrination intended to sever the boys' ties to their home and their community; in many cases, the RUF had killed their parents in order to leave nothing for the boys to return to in case they escaped. The boys were routinely subjected to violence; not as punishment (even though punishment was severe when necessary) but as a process of inculcating them with an acceptance of the normalcy of violent behavior and desensitizing them from both receiving and perpetrating violence.

There were actually incentives provided as reward for performance. RUF fighters would receive promotions (typically over new recruits which created a hierarchy of boys leading younger boys), drugs, and girls that served as workers and/or "wives". Drugs served as reward for deeds in battle, as preparation for battle, as a way of developing addictions in fighters that the RUF commanders controlled, and as painkillers. Combatants interviewed by Peters and Richards (1998, 186) state that they used marijuana, injections of amphetamines, crack cocaine or a cocktail of substances including gunpowder. Peters and Richards' findings

contrast with those of the studies cited above by focusing on voluntary juvenile participants. However, given that the sample size of their study is 22 interviews of which nine are accounts of voluntary participations, it is difficult to extrapolate those statements to a combined force of over 130,000 combatants, of which more than 48,000 were recruited as children[25]. By comparison, the sample size in Humphreys and Weinstein's studies (2004; 2006) is over 1,200 (of which roughly 200 were juvenile participants in the organizations, but not active combatants) and the sample size of Mazurana and Carlson's study (2004) includes 50 in-depth interviews with girl combatants, 60 interviews with community leaders, and all the official data from the DDR program in their estimates of total figures.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter applies a theoretical framework of recruitment by organizations of political violence. The framework focuses on the role of social networks and social norms as an alternative to the provision of selective benefits in resolving collective action problems. The analysis of the RUF serves as an example of a case study where the organization's deviation from the optimal strategy suggested by the framework constrained its future options. The RUF made its case to the

[25]Peters and Richards (1998) even state that the accounts are "typical" in their experience.

Sierra Leonean population in the early 1990s as an organization that intended to fight a corrupt government. In fact, later on Sankoh would openly declare that his goal was to *replace* the corrupt government. As this realization progressively became apparent to Sierra Leoneans, the support that the RUF enjoyed at the early stages of the conflict began to wane. Having no viable plan to utilize the sociopolitical environment of Sierra Leone in a way that would attract recruitment, the RUF increasingly turned to force in order to maintain its ranks.

On the other hand, the CDF which arose in direct opposition to the RUF, exhibited the very characteristics that are central to the framework: usage of existing social networks and norms in optimizing recruitment. Through the use of localized information channels and mechanisms, the CDF instilled a selective recruitment process through the consideration of past performance that was directly applicable to the task at hand. The linkage of hunting societies, fraternal organizations, and militias created a system that transposed existing hierarchies to a new form of organization, and expedited the formation of a networked pattern of participation with desirable features. The localized system provided personal incentives for participation to individual recruits, and concurrently discouraged shirking since it created a linkage between performance and reputation in a communal setting. Moreover, the system allowed for fluidity in participation, whereby individuals could join at different times since the costs associated with reintegration were low.

The Sierra Leonean civil war is frequently categorized as a case study of the effects of lootable goods on the causes of civil war, or as a case of greed in the 'greed and grievance' debate. This analysis illustrates that neither greed nor grievance adequately captures the dynamics of civil war as they develop over the duration of a conflict that undergoes significant transformations. Moreover, while greed may account for a broad, static characterization of the conflict - i.e. different organizations of political violence engaging in resource predation - it cannot capture the nuances of how these organizations go about putting together a fighting force. As a result, it can account neither for the way in which these organizations behave during the conflict, nor for the outcome of such a dynamic process.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the results from the application of the theoretical framework that I propose in this dissertation to the two case studies of the project. It then presents the limitations of the study in its present form as well as possible solutions to those limitations to be included in future iterations of the study.

Briefly restated, the theoretical expectations of the framework form three hypotheses: 1) broad social norms of expected behavior make both the organization and conduct of political violence less costly; 2) traditions that favor characteristics of combat-related behavior make the organization of political violence less costly; 3) the structure of the social network affects both of the above.

Are these expectations evident in the cases studied? Was the organization of political violence generally, and recruitment specifically, favored by the conditions present in each of the two sociopolitical environments?

5.2 Summary of results

5.2.1 Results from the Chechnya case study

In many ways, the analysis of organized political violence in Chechnya in the First War comes across as an illustrative case study of the theoretical framework. By all accounts, the long-standing traditions that characterize Chechen society promote behavioral traits that are transferable to combat scenaria. Moreover, the well-defined and rigid structure of the social network was incorporated into the configuration of the VPOs that emerged. The two mechanisms were mutually reinforcing: traditional social norms helped define and maintain the structure of the social network, while the strength and rigidity of the social network facilitated monitoring and enforcement of social norms.

Yet the case study reveals that an evaluation of the Russo-Chechen conflict in its entirety is not as simple as it perhaps first appears. Much of the literature that describes the conflict - especially the more journalistic accounts (Goltz 2003; Karny 2000; Nivat 2001) - tends to suffer from a tendency to mythologize the Chechen nation. Invariably, accounts cover

the same elements: Leo Tolstoy's expressed admiration for the bravery of Chechen warriors in his last novel *Hadji Murat*, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's similar depiction of Chechen prisoners in *The Gulag Archipelago*, Mikhail Lermontov's negatively stereotypical depiction of Caucasians as brigands in his poem 'Cossack Lullaby', and a long-standing mistrust of Russian imperialism culminating in the traumatic effects of the forced deportation of the entire Chechen-Ingush nation to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in 1944 by the Stalinist regime. While all these are relevant to a character study of the Chechen people, they hold little utility in explaining the causal factors of conflict or the organization of political violence beyond the general level. If the collective memory of deportation was a causal factor in 1994, why had it remained dormant for so long? A much more plausible explanation is that once the processes that led to conflict were underway, galvanizing Chechen public sentiment around rallying cries of unity was the result of an instrumental strategy by Chechen elites (Williams 2000).

In the same way, the elements of the theoretical framework that I propose may be interpreted as exaggerated in the case of Chechnya. In fact, as the analysis presented in the case study chapter indicates, it is easy to overstate the case and make a direct linkage between the social components of the Chechen nation and the causes of the conflict. However, the claim presented here is not that Chechen social norms and networks were the cause of the conflict or even that they were the "cause" of recruitment. Rather, the claim is that they optimized recruitment

by lowering recruitment costs, as well as by facilitating monitoring and enforcement of participation. In other words, care must be taken to avoid confusing facilitating conditions with causal mechanisms.

The mythologizing tendencies of the coverage of the First War were replaced by similar tendencies in the Second War, only this time the depictions of Chechens were not as favorable. During the First War, coverage of the conflict - especially by Western media - portrayed Chechens as victims of Russian aggression and Chechen rebels as valiant, even romantic, figures playing a part in the latest iteration of a seemingly interminable struggle. Evidently, the primordialist argument of "ancient hatreds" was difficult to resist. During the Second War, however, the depiction of Chechens shifted from brave victims to *jihadist* terrorists with similarities in both organization and conduct to Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda network (Murphy 2004)[1].

These tendencies serve to further differentiate (at least in terms of general perception) the First from Second War by creating the image of two distinct types of Chechens fighting in each case. Beyond mere image, there is also evidence of different characterizations of the conflict (ethnonationalist vs. religious *jihadist*), different strategies (defense of the Chechen homeland vs. attacks on Russian soil), and different tactics (guerrilla insurgency vs. terrorist attacks). In fact, many accounts of the Second War treat the earlier conflict as a completely separate and discreet

[1]Attempts by the Russian elite under Putin certainly promoted this demonization of Chechen identity; see Russell (2005).

event. It is somewhat ironic then to consider that the personnel involved were largely the same; in fact, as already stated, the people who brought the First War to an end - Shamil Basayev and his 'Abkhaz Battalion' - were the very same people who initiated the Second War. Another example is the disproportionate attention paid to the external element of support from global *jihadist* networks. Many accounts focus on the role that Ibn Al-Khattab played in the conflict; few of them examine his considerable involvement in the First War. As the case study illustrates, practically all of the elements that came to characterize the Second War were either present during the First War, or resulted from it. Thus, the conflict must be considered as one episodic process rather than two discreet events.

The framework captures the dynamic aspects of this process by highlighting the contrast in recruitment patterns and the organization of political violence between the First and Second War. Whereas in the first instance recruitment patterns mirror the expectations of the framework, in the second they present quite the opposite pattern. Chechen groups that operated during the Second War (and some still do) under the banner of a religious conflict, and especially those that placed the Chechen plight into the context of a global *jihad*, restricted their own pool of potential participants. This reconfiguration of the basis of the conflict led to a gradual but inexorable process towards internal fragmentation, and an increasing alienation from the traditions of Chechen society. As a result,

usage of the social norms and the robust Chechen social network became increasingly unavailable as facilitating mechanisms for recruitment.

This analysis highlights another element of the theoretical framework. If VPOs use these mechanisms - as the framework suggests - then we can expect a higher likelihood of success in recruitment. However, it is not the case that VPOs can simply choose to use these mechanisms; if that was the case, then they would all do so. It would make little sense for any organization, be it one of political violence or otherwise, to not take advantage of mechanisms that are both cost-free and cost-reducing. The framing of the organizational structure in terms of its pronouncements and engagement with the population largely defines the extent to which the use of these mechanisms will be available to VPOs. The variation in the organization of Chechen resistance in the First and Second War is a testament to that, as is the variation in the organization of political violence in the case of Sierra Leone which is discussed below.

5.2.2 Results from the Sierra Leone case study

The analysis of the Sierra Leonean Civil War also yields some interesting and counter-intuitive results. At face value, it seems like a simple case to judge - and evidently many commentators have found that to be the case (Grant 2005; Hirsch 2001; Le Billon 2005) - as a conflict of resource predation. As already mentioned, journalistic accounts in the 1990s (Ignatieff 1993b, Kaplan 1994) used Sierra Leone as a prototypical

example of what future wars would look like: anomic to the point of chaos, wantonly violent, and with little of the perceived ethos and ideology of past conflicts. That depiction of the conflict has persisted and has actually been reinforced by some of the unusual imagery that grasped the imaginations of Western spectators: heavily tattooed RUF fighters with bandoliered chests, West Side Boys with their Tupac Shakur shirts, or Mende Kamajors in their ritualistic garb, so many of all of them at such a young age.

Yet even social scientists that went beyond the spectacle came up with rather straightforward characterizations of the conflict. The most overwhelmingly popular interpretation has been that the Sierra Leonean Civil War was fought over the control of lootable resources, namely alluvial diamond mining operations. Thus, in the 'greed and grievance' debate, this case seems to fall squarely in the category of greed. And it is indeed the case that diamonds played a significant role in the conflict: every major participant - the RUF, the 'Sobels', even the largely defensive CDF - were involved in illicit diamond mining and trading. Yet the causal factor at work remains unclear.

There are various ways to consider the effects of the 'resource curse' of diamonds during the conflict. It could be that the various participants organized specifically with the objective of resource extraction, in which case diamonds may be regarded as a causal factor of conflict onset. It could be that once the participants were organized and were faced with

the costs of continued operation, they then sought to gain those resources for sustenance of their organizational structure. Or it could simply be that the acquisition of these resources was relatively easy and that participants took them because they were there for the taking. An examination of the historical record suggests that both of the latter were definitely the case at different times for different organizations in the conflict. Yet the usage most employed by political scientists is the first one, as part of a framework that explains the causal relationship between lootable resources and conflict onset.

But where is the evidence for this assertion? As illustrated above, the establishment of the RUF's core was the result of a marriage of strange bedfellows: student radicals with philosophical ideologies for sociopolitical transformation, and lumpen underclass youths that eventually provided the actual core of combatants once the more timid elements of student radicalism were swept aside over time. At no point was resource extraction the stated goal of this nascent core, at least in the early stages of development; at its outset this was a group that came together due to a mutual sentiment of marginalization by the existing state institutions. In other words, if anything, their guiding motivation was grievance and not greed at that stage. Moreover, since the appropriation of the state's resources had been common practice for Sierra Leone's patrimonial governments, there needs to be some explanation for the time-frame in which the conflict developed. In other words, why in the

early 1990s and not previously? There had been many previous coups (successful or attempted) in Sierra Leone's history; were diamonds the cause of those as well, and if not, why not?

In simple terms, the problem is that a static variable is employed in order to explain what is essentially a dynamic process. That is indeed a more general problem with the dichotomies that have come to characterize recent scholarship in the research area of civil wars. The Sierra Leonean case exemplifies the need for analytical tools that can capture the dynamism and complexity of individual conflicts both at the macro (causation) and the micro (individual participation) level of analysis.

In terms of the framework's parameters, the juxtaposition of the RUF and the CDF highlights one of the advantages of making the VPO the unit of analysis. There is no constraint to adopt one overarching explanation as the cause of the conflict. In general terms, what may be the motivating principle for one VPO could turn out to be the exact opposite for another. On the other hand, if it is the case that different participants to the conflict are fighting over the same objective, the framework is just as compatible with that. Moreover, the framework allows for the examination of VPOs as they evolve during a conflict. Events such as the splintering or morphing of groups (as in the examples of the West Side Boys and the 'Sobels') do not present a problem in this respect. Ultimately, a level of analysis that prioritizes the organizational level and uses data at the

individual level serves as a link between the macro and micro levels in ways that broader conceptualizations of conflict causation cannot.

In terms of the framework's hypotheses, there is a clear contrast between the two VPOs, similarly to the case of Chechnya. The RUF did not exhibit any linkage between Sierra Leonean social norms and traditions of conduct and its recruitment mechanisms; nor did its structure bear any resemblance to the social network at large. As such, its long term prospects for optimizing recruitment were minimal. Whether the RUF would have not engaged in resource extraction had it used those mechanisms is a counterfactual that cannot be ascertained. However, since the organization targeted the diamond-rich regions of Sierra Leone from the very beginning of its incursion suggests that there is little reason to believe that was not the organization's intention. In the end, the only plausible interpretation of the organization's prospects is that both its recruitment strategies and its conduct from the beginning of the conflict doomed it to failure, at least in terms of future recruitment. As a result, the reliance on forcible recruitment created a vicious cycle whereby the organization's increase in size created a corresponding opposition to it and a proportional decrease to the likelihood of voluntary recruitment.

By contrast, the CDF utilized both social norms and networks in its configuration. In fact, the feedback effect between the two - as predicted by the theoretical framework - is evident in the case of the CDF. The ethnic configuration of the social network was mirrored in the

configuration of the CDF groups, and the social norms associated with individual ethnicities were embedded in the semi-independent VPOs that operated on an ethnic as well as regional basis.

5.3 Theoretical implications

As described above in the discussion of results, each case study is composed of two analyses of the organization of political violence. Both case studies exhibit within-case variation. In each case study one VPO (in Chechnya, the Chechen resistance in the First War, and in Sierra Leone, the CDF) supports the hypotheses of the theoretical framework. Both used social norms embedded in the sociopolitical environment, both employed traits that revealed fitness information for combat-related behavior, and both exhibited an organizational structure that mirrored the structure of the social network.

On the other hand, the other VPO in each case study (in Chechnya, the Chechen resistance in the Second War, and in Sierra Leone, the RUF) did not use social norms, or employ information-revealing mechanisms or mirror the social network structure. In both cases, there is evidence to suggest that the organizations did not enjoy the benefits that the hypotheses describe. This outcome definitely does not reject the hypotheses but it does not necessarily support them either. The argument presented by the theoretical framework is that the use of social norms

and networks lowers costs, not that costs will be lowered if and only if social norms and networks are used. In other words, the argument is one of conditionality but not one of biconditionality, since lower costs could be the result of other antecedent conditions uncaptured by this theoretical framework. Nevertheless, the outcome is suggestive of the possibility of a much stronger correlation than initially anticipated, if not outright biconditionality. This determination can only be made through subsequent application of the framework to a larger universe of case studies.

Another significant theoretical implication is that while the two case studies vary considerably in terms of their overarching characterization within typologies of conflict processes, the analysis of each illustrates surprising similarities. The two Russo-Chechen Wars are usually categorized respectively as an ethnonationalist separatist insurgency and a religious separatist insurgency. The Sierra Leonean civil war is usually categorized as a conflict of resource predation. One may assume that the theoretical framework that I present would be much better suited at explaining the first type rather than the second. Yet the analysis shows that the framework has a wide scope of applicability to a universe of cases not restricted by broad characterizations or static typologies that, ultimately, tell us very little about the organization of political violence.

However, far from being a definitive statement on the organization of political violence, there are various limitations of the study. These

are discussed below along with suggestions for further research that may remedy those limitations and advance the scope of the theoretical framework.

5.4 Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research

The most obvious limitation of the study is the reliance on secondary literature for data acquisition. There is always the possibility of selection biases by different authors even in the presentation of seemingly objective data. Most problematic is the possibility of confirmation bias that may be undetectable when the original data are not available. To remedy this limitation, future applications of the theoretical framework must incorporate original data, integrating first-hand accounts from individual participants with secondary literature. A related limitation is that the current application is limited to two case studies. On the other hand, it is difficult to envision a large-N study that is based on original data purely on practical grounds.

The acquisition and use of original data will also allow analytical refinement and the potential use of additional methodological tools. A common methodological choice for similar theoretical frameworks is statistical analysis. Since participation at the individual level is a dichotomous variable, the appropriate methodological technique is the

use of binomial regression. The most common models used in such cases are the logit and the probit generalized linear models. The biggest advantages of this approach would be the ability to disaggregate the effects of a number of explanatory variables, and the possibility of operationalizing the variables in the existing formulation of the framework in new ways. The biggest disadvantage of this approach is that it is generally static. Since one of the major advantages of the approach that I present is the ability to track changes in a dynamic environment, it would not be beneficial for statistical analysis to be the only tool but a component of a mixed-methods approach.

The other methodological solution that suggests itself is formal social network analysis. Network theory applications are becoming increasingly popular in political science, especially in areas of conflict studies with applications such as transnational terrorist network analysis. A similar application to the organization of political violence can be used to examine the exact nature between the structure of a VPO and the social structure from which it emerges. The comparison of the two network structures can utilize concepts such as centrality measures in order to establish the relationship between the hierarchical nature of the two, as well as communication patterns both within the VPO and across the two networks. This approach could also examine how the relationship between the two networks develops through the duration of a conflict. One limitation to this approach is that while it may prove very useful for

analyzing the social network component of the framework, it may not provide as much insight into the interaction between social networks and social norms. Therefore, as with the possible usage of statistical analysis, this tool would be more beneficial if used in conjunction with other tools.

The most important theoretical limitation of the project is that the argument does not (and at this stage cannot) determine the exact relationship between the two main variables. In other words, it is not clear whether the effects of social norms have a more significant influence on the effects of social networks, or vice versa. Given that there are feedback characteristics between the two mechanisms, the determination of that relationship can also provide insight into the nature of the causal relationship between the mechanisms and the probability of successful recruitment. This would be especially beneficial in conjunction with the usage of the additional methodological tools described above.

A refinement of the framework and the acquisition of original data can add an entirely new dimension to its explanatory power. At this stage, the framework is basically used to provide an answer to the question of *how* organizations of political violence come together. But it cannot provide an answer to the question of *why* individuals participate that goes beyond the structure of the collective action problem as presented here. Thus, the framework focuses on the behavior of individuals as constrained by their environment but not on their personal choices as defined by their preferences.

How are those preferences defined? It is easy to dismiss that question as too open-ended, since there could be a myriad of explanations that cause individuals to take action. Partly, that is the reason why so much of the research in this area tends to overlook micro level considerations. But surely any answer that is revealed through the careful examination of individual level data can be illuminating, even if (or, in some sense, especially if) it reveals that the considerations of the individual are unrelated to group-level considerations.

A multi-level approach that includes examination of the macro (broad characterization of individual conflict cases), the meso (VPOs as the unit of analysis, as in this study), and the micro (individual participation) level may be achieved by starting at the lowest level with the use of original data and aggregating results upwards. In other words, rather than starting at the top with generalized conceptions of conflict causation, it may be preferable to examine data at the individual level for possible patterns of interaction that are - for all intents and purposes - invisible at the higher strata of inquiry.

A final consideration is that in a very obvious sense the project selects on the dependent variable: case study selection consists of VPOs that were active in the production of political violence. It does not take into consideration instances of failure to organize and failure to recruit. In other words, there is no study of the proverbial "dogs that didn't bark". While there is significant within-case variation in the conflicts in

Chechnya and Sierra Leone, perhaps a more interesting scenario would be a case study that exhibits within-case variation where success and failure in the organization of political violence can be directly contrasted.

5.5 Concluding remarks

This dissertation presented a theoretical framework of recruitment for the organization of political violence. The framework was applied to case studies of two conflicts: the Russo-Chechen War (1994–1996 and 1999–2009) and the Sierra Leonean civil war (1991–2002).

The analysis of the case study yielded favorable results for the applicability of the theoretical framework. Further refinements and applications of the framework are necessary to reach a conclusive assessment of its scope. The acquisition of original data is a necessary step to that same end.

Research on the process, as well as the effects, of recruitment on other aspects of conflict processes is at a nascent stage in the literature. Meanwhile, the integration of studies of political violence from previously disparate research areas is contributing to the development of more refined analytical and methodological tools to answer such questions, and a more clearly delineated research agenda on political violence. This dissertation, as well as future work that will follow from it, is placed within this developing area.

Appendix A

Maps

Figure A.1: Map of Chechnya (2001).Source: University of Texas Libraries.

Figure A.2: Map of Sierra Leone (2005).
Source: University of Texas Libraries.

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